PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY:

OR, THE

RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT CHRISTIANS

IN THE FIRST AGES OF THE GOSPEL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE

GOVERNMENT OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH

BY

BISHOPS, METROPOLITANS, AND PATRIARCHS.

BY

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A NEW EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED,

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PREFACE.

I know not whether it may be any satisfaction to the curiosity of the reader, to understand the birth and original of these papers; if it be, let him take this account. No sooner did I arrive at years of capable discerning, but I began to inquire into the grounds of that religion into which I had been baptized; which I soon found to be so noble and excellent, in all its laws so just and rational, in all its designs so divine and heavenly, so perfective of the principles, so conducive to the happiness of human nature; a religion so worthy of God, so advantageous to man, built upon such firm and uncontrollable evidence, backed with such proper and powerful arguments, that I was presently convinced of the divinity that resided in it, and concluded with myself, (and I thought I had reason so to do,) that surely the disciples of this religion must needs be the most excellent persons in the world. But, alas! a few years experience of the world let me see, that this was the conclusion of one that had conversed only with books, and the reasonings of his own mind. I had not been long an observer of the manners of men, but I found them generally so debauched and vicious, so corrupt and contrary to the rules of this holy religion, that if a modest and honest heathen was to estimate Christianity by the lives of its professors, he would certainly proscribe it as the vilest religion in the world. Being offended hereat, I resolved "to stand in the ways and see, and inquire for the good old way, the paths wherein the ancient Christians walked." For I could not think that this had always been the unhappy fate and portion of Christianity; and that if the footsteps of true Christian piety and simplicity were any where to be found, it must be in those

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times "when (as St. Jerome notes[a]) the blood of Christ was yet warm in the breasts of Christians, and the faith and spirit of religion more brisk and vigorous."

In pursuance of this design, I set myself to a more close and diligent reading of the first fathers and ancient monuments of the church than ever I had done before, especially for the three or four first centuries, for much lower I did not intend to go, because the life and spirit of Christianity did then visibly decline apace; nothing, as I went along, whatever contributed to my satisfaction in this affair. Had I consulted my own ease and quiet, I might have gone a nearer way to work, and have taken up with what I could have picked up of this nature in Baronius, the Centuries, &c. But I could not satisfy myself (and I presume it would as little have satisfied the reader) with shreds, with things taken upon trust, and borrowed at the second hand. For the same reason I made little use of the Lives of the Saints, (especially in such instances whereof there was the least cause to doubt,) and the spurious and supposititious writings of the fathers, seldom making use of any but such as are of unquestionable credit and authority. And because the testimony of an enemy is ever accounted of great moment and regard, I have been careful to add the testimonies that have been given to Christians and to their religion by the known and professed adversaries of the Christian faith, such as Pliny, Lucian, Porphyry, Julian, &c.; more whereof we might have been furnished with, had those writings of theirs against the Christian religion been extant, which the zeal of the first Christian princes industriously banished out of the world. What other authors of later date I have borrowed any light from in this discourse, I have faithfully produced in the margin. Two books, indeed, I met with, which at first sight I well hoped would have wholly saved me the labour of this search; the one written by

[a] "Quando Domini nostri adhuc calebat cruor, et servebat recens in credentibus fines." Hier. ad Demet.

a person of our own nation,[b] the other by a Florentine of great name and note,[c] but my hopes were very much frustrated in both. For the first, I no sooner looked into it, but found myself wretchedly imposed upon by the title; his elder times and Christians (not to say any thing of his intermixtures of things nothing to his purpose) seldom reaching any higher than the middle ages of the church, little or nothing being remarked of the first ages of Christianity, the only thing I aimed at. For the other, (which I met not with till I had almost finished this search,) I found it miserably thin and empty, containing little else but short glosses upon some few passages out of Tertullian, from whence I did not enrich myself with any one observation which I had not made before. There is, indeed, an epistle of Fronto's,[d] the learned chancellor of the university of Paris, concerning this affair; but it contains only some general intimations, and seems to have been designed by him (as appears from that and some other of his epistles) as the ground-work of a larger and more particular discourse: but his death happening some few years after the date of that epistle, cut off all hopes of prosecuting so excellent a design. These are all that I know of, who have attempted any thing in this subject; none whereof coming up to the curiosity of my design, I was forced to resume the task I had undertaken, and to go on with it through those ancient writers of the church; the result of which search is laid together in this book.

Whether I have discharged myself herein to the satisfaction of the reader, I know not; sure I am, I have endeavoured what I propounded to myself, viz. a specimen of primitive Christianity, in some of the most considerable branches and instances of religion. Here he will find a piety active and zealous, shining

[b] A modest Discourse of the Piety, Charity, and Policy of older Times and Christians, &c. by Edward Waterhouse. London, 1655.

[c] Paganin. Gaudentius de vita Christianorum ante tempora Constantini. Florent. 1639.

[d] De vita et moribus Christianorum, etc. Par. 1660.

through the blackest clouds of malice and cruelty; afflicted innocence triumphant, notwithstanding all the powerful or politic attempts of men or devils; a patience unconquerable under the biggest persecutions; a charity truly catholic and unlimited; a simplicity and upright carriage in all transactions; a sobriety and temperance remarkable to the admiration of their enemies; and, in short, he will here see the divine and holy precepts of the Christian religion drawn down into action, and the most excellent genius and spirit of the gospel breathing in the hearts and lives of these good old Christians. Here he will find a real and evident confutation of that senseless and absurd calumny that was fastened upon Christianity, as if it required no more than an easy and credulous temper of mind; as if, under a pretence of kindness and indulgence to sinners, it ministered to all vice and wickedness. Celsus confidently begins the charge: "There be some amongst the Christians (says he[e]) that will neither give nor receive a reason of their faith, who are wont to cry out, Do not examine, but believe; and, Thy faith will save thee; The wisdom of this world is evil, but foolishness good and useful." Julian carries on the charge somewhat higher, as if the Christian religion were not only content with a naked and an empty faith, but gave encouragement to sin, by assuring its most desperate proselytes of an easy pardon. In the conclusion of his Cæsars, after he had assigned the Roman emperors their particular tutelar deities, he delivers over Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, to the goddess of Pleasure, who having effeminately tricked and dressed him up, brought him to the goddess Asotia, or intemperance, where he finds τὸν υἱὸν, "his son," Constantius, probably, (for the passage is a little disturbed and obscure, for which reason, probably, the translator passed it by, and took no notice of it,) making this universal proclamation:[f] "Whoever is an adulterer, or a murderer, whoever is an impure profligate wretch, let him come boldly; for I declare that, being washed in

[e] Orig. adv. Cels. l. i. s. 9. Vid. l. vi. s. 11.

[f] Julian. Cæsares, p. 53.

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this water, [baptism,] he shall immediately be cleansed; nay, although he again commit those sins, let him but knock his breast and beat his head, and I will make him clean." Much to the same purpose Zosimus (as good a friend to Christianity as either of the former) spitefully charges it upon Constantine the Great, that being haunted with the conscience of his prodigious villanies, and having no hopes given him by the Gentile priests of the expiation of his crimes, embraced Christianity; being told, that in the Christian religion "there was a promise of cleansing from all sin, and that as soon as ever any closed with it, pardon would be granted to the most profligate offenders:"[g] as if Christianity had been nothing else but a receptacle and sanctuary for rogues and villains, where the worst of men might be wicked under hopes of pardon. But how false and groundless (especially as urged and intended by them) this impious charge was, appears from the whole design and tenor of the gospel, and that more than ordinary vein of piety and strictness that was conspicuous in the lives of its first professors, whereof we have in this treatise given abundant evidence.

To this representation of their lives and manners, I have added some account concerning the ancient rites and usages of the church; wherein if any one shall meet with something that does not jump with his own humour, he will, I doubt not, have more discretion than to quarrel with me for setting down things as I found them: but in this part I have said the less, partly because this was not the thing I primarily designed, partly because it has been done by others in just discourses. In some few instances I have remarked the corruption and degeneracy of the church of Rome from the purity and simplicity of the ancient church; and more I could easily have added, but that I studiously avoided controversies: it being no part of my design to inquire what was the judgment of the fathers in disputable cases, especially the more abstruse and intricate speculations of

[g] Zosim. Hist. l. ii. c. 29.

theology, but what was their practice, and by what rules and measures they did govern and conduct their lives: the truth is, their creed in the first ages was short and simple, their faith lying then (as Erasmus observes[h]) not so much in nice and numerous articles, as in a good and an holy life. At the end of the book I have added a chronological index of the authors,[i] according to the times wherein they are supposed to have lived, with an account of the editions of their works made use of in this treatise: which I did, not that I had a mind to tell the world, either what, or how many books I had, a piece of vanity of which, had I been guilty, it had been no hard matter to have furnished out a much larger catalogue: but I did it partly to gratify the request of the bookseller, partly because I conceived it might not be altogether unuseful to the reader; the index to give some light to the quotations, by knowing when the author lived, especially when he speaks of things done in or near his own time, and which must otherwise have been done at every turn in the body of the book. And, because there are some writings frequently made use of in this book, the authors whereof in this index could be reduced to no certain date, especially those that are called the Apostolical Canons and Constitutions, it may not be amiss here briefly to take notice of them. And first for the Canons: as I am far from their opinion who ascribe them to the apostles, so I think their great antagonist, Mr. Daille, bends the stick as much too far the other way, not allowing them a being in the world till the year 500, or a little before. The truth doubtless lies between these two: it is evident, both from the histories of the church, and many passages in Tertullian, Cyprian, and others, that there were, in the most early ages of Christianity, frequent synods and councils for settling the doc-

[h] Præfat. in Hilar. oper.

[i] Instead of the Index here mentioned, an Alphabetical Table of the principal authors referred to by Cave has been prefixed to the new edition of his Lives of the Fathers and of the Apostles.

trine and discipline of the church, though the determinations under that notion be not extant at this day. Part of these synodical decrees, so many of them as concerned the rites and discipline of the church, we may conceive some person of learning and judgment gathered together, probably about the beginning of the third century, and put them, (especially the first fifty, for I look not upon the whole eighty-five as of equal value and authority,) if not into the same, into some such sort or method wherein we now have them; styling them Ecclesiactical or Apostolical Canons; not as if they had been composed by the apostles, but either because containing things consonant to the doctrines and rules delivered by the apostles, or because made up of usages and traditions supposed to be derived from them, or, lastly, because made by ancient and apostolic men. That many, if not all of these canons, were some considerable time extant before the first Nicene council, we have great reason to believe, from two or three passages amongst many others. St. Basil,[j] giving rules about discipline, appoints a deacon guilty of fornication to be deposed and thrust down into the rank of laics, and that in that capacity he might receive the communion, "there being, (says he,) ἀρχαῖος κανών, 'an ancient canon,' that they that are deposed should only fall under this kind of punishment; the ancients (as I suppose) following herein that command, thou shalt not punish twice for the same fault." This Balsamon joins with the twenty-fifth canon of the apostles, which treats of the very same affair; and indeed it cannot, in probability, be meant of any other, partly because there was no ancient canon (that we know of) in St. Basil's time about this business, but that partly because the same sentence is applied as the reason both in the apostolical and St. Basil's canon, "thou shalt not punish twice for the same fault;" which clearly shews whence Basil had it, and what he understands by his ancient canon. Theodoret[k] records a letter of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria,

[j] Ep. Canon. ad Amphil. Can. 3.

[k] Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 4.

to another of the same name bishop of Constantinople, (this letter was written a little before the council of Nice,) where speaking of some bishops who had received the Arians, whom he had excommunicated, into communion, he tells him, "that herein they had done what the Apostolical Canons did not allow;" evidently referring to the twelfth and thirteenth canons of the apostles, which state the case about one bishop's receiving those into communion who had been excommunicated by another. To this let me add, that Constantine, in a letter to Eusebius,[l] commends him for refusing to leave his own bishopric to go over to that of Antioch, to which he was chosen; especially "because herein he had exactly observed the rule of ecclesiastical discipline, and had kept the commands of God, and the apostolical and ecclesiastic canon;" meaning, doubtless, the fourteenth apostolic canon, which treats about such removes. Nay, learned men, both formerly and of late, have observed divers passages in the Nicene canons themselves, which plainly respect these canons, as might be made appear, (notwithstanding what Daille has excepted against it,) were this a proper place to discourse of it. This for the Canons.

For the Constitutions, they are said to have been composed by St. Clemens, at the instance and by the direction of the apostles. And this wild and extravagant opinion has not wanted its patrons and defenders, Turrianus, Bovius, &c., but herein deserted by the more modest and moderate of their own party; besides that their apostolicalness (in this sense) is, by the learned Daille,[m] everlastingly shattered and broken. But then he sets them at too wide a distance, assigning them to the latter end of the fifth century, when it is as clear as the sun that they were extant and in credit with many before the times of Epiphanius, (though somewhat altered now from what they were in his time,) compiled probably out of many lesser Διδαχαὶ and Διατάξεις, books containing the doctrines and rites that had been

[l] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iii. c. 61.

[m] De Pseud. epigr. Apol. ii. c. 17.

delivered and practised by ancient and apostolical persons, or, at least, vented under their names; but whether, as some conjecture, composed by Clemens Alexandrinus, (and thence, by an easy mistake, ascribed to Clemens Romanus,) I am not at leisure to consider. In this class of writers I may reckon Dionysius the Areopagite, absurdly enough asserted by many to be genuine, by Daille thrust down to the beginning of the sixth century: but most probably thought to have been written about the middle of the fourth age, as a person amongst us, deservedly of great name and note, has shewn in his late vindication of Ignatius's epistles. These are the principles of those authors, who could not be fixed upon any certain year: the rest have in the index their particular and respective times. To which I have added the account of the editions, for the more ready finding (if occasion be) of any passage quoted out of them.

One thing, indeed, there is which I cannot but take notice of, it looks so like a piece of vanity and ostentation that the margin is charged with so many quotations; but whoever considers the nature of my design, will quickly see that it was absolutely necessary, and that it concerned me not to deliver any thing without good authority; the reason why I have, where I could, brought them in speaking their own words: though to avoid as much of the charge as was possible, I omitted the citing authors in their own languages, and only set them down in English, faithfully representing the author's sense, though not always tying myself to a strict and precise translation. How pertinent my quotations are, the reader must judge: I hope he will find them exact, being immediately fetched from the fountain head; here being very few (if any) that have not been examined more than once. For the method into which the book is cast, I chose that which to me seemed most apt and proper, following St. Paul's distribution of religion, into piety towards God, sobriety towards ourselves, and righteousness towards others; and accordingly divided the discourse into three parts,

respecting those three great branches of religion; though the first is much larger than either of the other, by reason of some preliminary chapters, containing a vindication of the Christians from those crimes that were charged upon them; that so, the rubbish being cleared and thrown out of the way, we might have a fairer prospect of their religion afterwards. The book, I confess, is swelled into a greater bulk than I either thought of or desired; but by reason of somewhat a confused copy, never designed for the press, no certain measures could be taken of it.

And now if after all this it shall be inquired, why these papers are made public, as I can give no very good reason, so I will not trouble myself to invent a bad one. It may suffice to intimate, that this discourse (long since drawn up at leisure hours) lay then by me, when a tedious and uncomfortable distemper (whereby I have been taken off from all public service and the prosecution of severer studies) gave me too much opportunity to look over my papers, and this especially, which, peradventure, otherwise had never seen the light. Indeed, I must confess, I was somewhat the easilier prevailed with to let this discourse pass abroad, that it might appear, that when I could not do what I ought, I was, at least, willing to do what I could. If he that reads it shall reap any delight or satisfaction by it, or be in any measure induced to imitate these primitive virtues, I shall think my pains well bestowed: if not, I am not the first, and probably shall not be the last, that has written a book to no purpose.

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PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THINGS CHARGED UPON THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS RESPECTING THEIR RELIGION.

Christian religion likely to meet with opposition at its first setting out. Chiefly undermined by calumnies and reproaches. Three things by the heathens charged upon the Christians—some things respecting their religion; some their outward condition; others their moral carriage, and the matters of their worship. Their religion charged with two things—impiety and novelty. The charge of atheism considered, and answered out of the fathers. The heathens excepted against, as incompetent judges of the affairs of Christianity. In what sense Christians confessed themselves atheists. The wretched and absurd deities that were amongst the heathens, and the impure manner of their worship. Atheism, properly such, disowned and denied by Christians. The account they gave of their religion, and the God whom they worshipped.

No sooner did the Son of God appear in the world, to establish the most excellent religion that ever was communicated to mankind, but he met with the most fierce and vigorous opposition: persecuted and devoted to death as soon as he was born, followed all his life with fresh assaults of malice and cruelty, his credit traduced and slandered, his doctrine despised and slighted, and himself at last put to death with the most exquisite arts of torture and disgrace. And "if they thus served the master of the house, how much more them of the household? the disciple not being above his master, nor the servant above his lord."

Therefore, when he gave commission to his apostles, to publish this religion to the world, he told them beforehand what hard and unkind reception they must look to meet with: "that he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; that they should be delivered up to the councils, and scourged in the synagogues, and be brought before kings and governors, and be hated of all men for his name's sake." Nay, so high should the quarrel arise upon the account of religion, that men should violate some of the nearest laws of nature, "betray their friends and kinsfolk; the brother delivering up the brother to death, and the father the child; the children rising up against their parents, and causing them to be put to death." This he well foresaw (and the event truly answered it) would be the fate of its first appearing in the world: and, indeed, considering the present state and circumstances of the world at that time, it could not reasonably be expected that the Christian religion should meet with a better entertainment; for the genius and nature of its doctrine was such, as was almost impossible to escape the frowns and displeasure of men: a doctrine it was that called men off from lusts and pleasures, and offered violence to their native inclinations; that required the greatest strictness and severity of life; obliged men "to deny themselves, to take up their cross," and to follow the steps of a poor crucified Saviour, and that upon little other encouragement at present, than the invisible rewards of another world. It introduced new rites and ceremonies, unknown to those of former ages, and such as did undermine the received and established principles of that religion that for so many generations had governed the world: it revealed and brought to light such truths as were not only contrary to the principles of men's education, but many of them above the reach of natural comprehension, too deep for the line of human reason to fathom or find out.

Upon these, and such like accounts, Christianity was sure to encounter with mighty prejudices and potent opposition; and so it did: for no sooner did it peep abroad in the world, but it was "every where spoken against;" princes and potentates, and the greatest powers and policies of the world, did for some ages confederate and combine together, to extirpate and banish it out of the world: and certainly, if arms and armies, if strength and subtlety, if malice and cruelty could have stifled it, it had been

smothered in its infancy and first delivery into the world. But notwithstanding all these oppositions, it still lifted up its head in triumph, and outbraved the fiercest storms of persecution; and, as Tertullian told their enemies,[a] "by every exquisite act of cruelty, they did but tempt others to come over to the party; the oftener they were mowed down, the faster they sprung up again, the blood of Christians making the church's soil more fat and fertile." Hereupon the great enemy of mankind betook himself to other counsels, and sought to undermine what he saw he could not carry by open assault and battery: he studied to leaven the minds of men with false and unjust prejudices against Christianity, and to burden it with whole loads of reproaches and defamations; knowing no speedier way to hinder its reception, than to blast its reputation. For this purpose all the arts of spite and malice were mustered up, and Christians confidently charged with all those crimes that could render them and their religion vile and infamous. Now the things that were charged upon the Christians were either such as respected their religion, or such as concerned their outward state and condition, or such as related to their moral carriage and behaviour, with some things relating to the matter or manner of their worship. We shall consider them in order, and how the Christians of those times vindicated themselves from these imputations.

The Christian religion, at its first coming abroad into the world, was mainly charged with these two things, impiety and novelty. For the first, it was commonly cried out against as a grand piece of atheism and impiety, as an affront to their religion, and an undermining the very being and existence of their gods. This is the sum of the charge, as we find it in the ancient apologists;[b] more particularly Cæcilius the heathen, in Minutius Felix, accuses the Christians for a desperate, undone, and unlawful faction, who by way of contempt did snuff and spit at the mention of their gods, deride their worship, scoff at their priests, and despise their temples, as no better than charnel-houses, and heaps of bones and ashes of the dead; for these, and such like reasons, the Christians were every where accounted a pack of atheists, and their religion "the atheism;" and seldom it is that Julian the emperor calls Christianity by any other

[a] Apol. c. ult.

[b] Just. Mart. Apol. ii. s. 3. Athenag. Legat. s. 4. Arnob. l. i. p. 7. Min. Fel. Octav. c. 8.

name. Thus Lucian,[c] bringing in Alexander, the impostor, setting up for an oracle-monger, ranks the Christians with Atheists and Epicureans, as those that were especially to be banished from his mysterious rites. In answer to this charge, the Christians pleaded especially these three things.

First; that the Gentiles were, for the most part, incompetent judges of such cases as these, as being almost wholly ignorant of the true state of the Christian doctrine, and therefore unfit to pronounce sentence against it. Thus when Crescens the philosopher had traduced the Christians as atheistical and irreligious, Justin Martyr answers,[d] that he talked about things which he did not understand, feigning things of his own head, only to comply with the humour of his seduced disciples and followers; that in reproaching the doctrine of Christ, when he did not understand it, he discovered a most wicked and malignant temper, and shewed himself far worse than the most simple and unlearned, who are not wont rashly to bear witness and determine in things not sufficiently known to them: or if he did understand its greatness and excellency, then he shewed himself much more base and disingenuous, in charging upon it what he knew to be false, and concealing his inward sentiments and convictions, for fear lest he should be suspected to be a Christian. But Justin well knew that he was miserably unskilful in matters of Christianity, having formerly had conferences and disputations with him about these things; and therefore offered the senate of Rome, (to whom he then presented his Apology,) if they had not heard the sum of it, to hold another conference with him, even before the senate itself; which he thought would be a work worthy of so wise and grave a council: or if they had heard it, then he did not doubt but they clearly apprehended how little he understood these things; or, that if he did understand them, he knowingly dissembled it to his auditors, not daring to own the truth, as Socrates did in the face of danger: an evident argument, that he was *οὐ φιλόσοφος ἀλλὰ φιλόδοξος*, "not a philosopher," but a "slave to popular applause and glory."

Secondly; they did in some sort confess the charge, that, according to the vulgar notion which the heathens had of their deities, they were atheists, i. e. strangers and enemies to them;[e]

[c] Pseudomant. vol. ii. p. 888. [d] Just. Mart. Apol. ii. s. 3. [e] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 6.

that the gods of the Gentiles were at best but demons, impure and unclean spirits, who had long imposed upon mankind, and by their villanies, sophistries, and arts of terror had so affrighted the common people, who knew not really what they were, and who judge of things more by appearance than by reason, that they called them gods, and gave to every one of them that name which the demon was willing to take to himself; and that they really were nothing but devils, fallen and apostate spirits, the Christians evidently manifested at every turn, forcing them to the confessing it, while by prayer and invocating the name of the true God they drove them out of possessed persons, and therefore they trembled to encounter with a Christian, as Octavius[f] triumphingly tells Cæcilius; that they entertained the most absurd and fabulous notions of their gods, and usually ascribed such things to them as would be accounted an horrible shame and dishonour to any wise and good man, the worship and mysterious rites of many of them being so brutish and filthy that the honester and severer Romans were ashamed of it, and therefore overturned their altars, and banished them out of the roll of their deities, though their degenerate posterity took them in again, as Tertullian observes;[g] their gods themselves so impure and beastly, their worship so obscene and detestable, that Julius Firmicus[h] advises them to turn their temples into theatres, where the secrets of their religion may be delivered in scenes, and to make their players priests, and that the common rout might sing the amours, the sports and pastimes, the wantonnesses and impieties of their gods, no places being so fit for such a religion as they. Besides the attributing to them human bodies, with many blemishes and imperfections, and subjection to the miseries of human life, and to the laws of mortality, they could not deny them to have been guilty of the most horrid and prodigious villanies and enormities, revenge and murder, incest and luxury, drunkenness and intemperance, theft and unnatural rebellion against their parents, and such like, of which their own writings were full almost in every page, which served only to corrupt and debauch the minds and manners of youth, as Octavius tells his adversary;[i] where he pursues this argument at large, with great eloquence and reason. Nay, those among them

[f] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 28. [g] Apol. c. 7. [h] De err. prof. Relig. p. 21.
[i] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 25. Vid. Arnob. adv. gent. l. i. p. 7.

that were most inquisitive and serious, and that entertained more abstract and refined apprehensions of things than the common people, yet could not agree in any fit and rational notion of a deity,[k] some ridiculously affirming one thing, and some another, till they were divided into a hundred different opinions, and all of them farther distant from the truth than they were from one another; the vulgar, in the mean while, making gods of the most brutish objects, such as dogs, cats, wolves, goats, hawks, dragons, beetles, crocodiles, &c. This Origen, against Celsus, particularly charges upon the Egyptians: "When you approach (says he[l]) their sacred places, they have glorious groves and chapels, temples with goodly gates and stately porticos, and many mysterious and religious ceremonies; but when once you are entered, and got within their temples, you shall see nothing but a cat, or an ape, or a crocodile, or a goat, or a dog, worshipped with the most solemn veneration." Nay,[m] they deified senseless and inanimate things, that had no life or power to help themselves, much less their worshippers—herbs, roots, and plants; nay, unmanly and degenerate passions, fear, paleness, &c.; fell down before stumps and statues, which owed all their divinity to the cost and folly of their votaries; despised and trampled on by the sorriest creatures, mice, swallows, &c. who were wont to build nests in the very mouth of their gods, and spiders to periwig their heads with cobwebs; being forced first to make them, and then make them clean, and to defend and protect them, that they might fear and worship them, as he in Minutius wittily derides them: "in whose worship there are (says he[n]) many things that justly deserve to be laughed at, and others that call for pity and compassion." And what wonder now if the Christians were not in the least ashamed to be called Atheists, with respect to such deities, and such a religion as this was?

Thirdly; in the strict and proper notion of atheism they no less truly than confidently denied the charge, and appealed to their severest adversaries, whether those who owned such principles as they did could reasonably be styled Atheists. None ever pleaded better and more irrefragable arguments for the existence of a Supreme Infinite Being, who made and governs all things by infinite wisdom and almighty power; none ever

[k] Vid. Min. Fel. Octav. c. 24.

[l] Adv. Cels. l. iii. s. 17.

[m] Vid. Athanas. orat. contr. gent.

[n] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 25.

more ready to produce a most clear and candid confession of their faith, as to this grand article of religion, than they. Although we profess ourselves atheists, with respect to those whom you esteem and repute to be gods, (so their apologist tells the senate,[o]) yet not in respect of the true God, the parent and fountain of wisdom and righteousness, and all other excellencies and perfections, who is infinitely free from the least contagion or spot of evil: him, and his only begotten Son, (who instructed us and the whole society of good angels in these divine mysteries,) and the Spirit of prophecy, we worship and adore, honouring them in truth, and with the highest reason, and ready to communicate these things to any one that is willing to learn them, as we ourselves have received them. Can we then be atheists,[p] who worship the great Creator of this world; not with blood, incense, and offerings, (which we are sufficiently taught he stands in no need of,) but exalt him according to our power, with prayers and praises, in all the addresses we make to him? believing this to be the only honour that is worthy of him, not to consume the creatures which he has given us for our use, and the comfort of those that want, in the fire by sacrifice; but to approve ourselves thankful to him, and to sing and celebrate rational hymns and sacrifices, pouring out our prayers to him as a grateful return for those many good things which we have received, and do yet expect from him, according to the faith and trust that we have in him. To the same purpose Athenagoras,[q] in his return to his charge. Diagoras, indeed, (says he,) was guilty of the deepest atheism and impiety; but we, who separate God from all material being, and affirm him to be eternal and unbegotten, but all matter to be made and corruptible, how unjustly are we branded with impiety? It is true, did we side with Diagoras in denying a divinity, when there are so many and such powerful arguments from the creation and government of the world to convince us of the existence of God and religion, then both the guilt and punishment of atheism might deservedly be put upon us. But when our religion acknowledges one God, the Maker of the universe, who being uncreate himself, created all things by his Word, we are manifestly wronged both in word and deed; both in being charged with it, and in being punished for it. We are accused (says Arnobius[r]) for introducing profane

[o] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 6. [p] Ibid. s. 13. [q] Legat. pro Christ. s. 4. [r] Lib. i. p. 7.

rites, and an impious religion; but tell me, O ye men of reason, how dare you make so rash a charge? To adore the mighty God, the Sovereign of the whole creation, the Governor of the highest powers, to pray to him with the most obsequious reverence; under an afflicted state to lay hold of him with all our powers, to love him, and look up to him; is this a dismal and detestable religion, a religion full of sacrilege and impiety, destroying and defiling all ancient rites? Is this that bold and prodigious crime for which your gods are so angry with us, and for which you yourselves do so rage against us, confiscating our estates, banishing our persons, burning, tearing, and racking us to death with such exquisite tortures? We Christians are nothing else but the worshippers of the Supreme King and Governor of the world, according as we are taught by Christ our Master; search, and you will find nothing else in our religion: this is the sum of the whole affair; this the end and design of our divine offices; before him it is that we are wont to prostrate and bow ourselves, him we worship with common and conjoined devotions, from him we beg those things which are just and honest, and such as are not unworthy of him to hear and grant. So little reason had the enemies of Christianity to brand it with the note of atheism and irreligion.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE NOVELTY THAT WAS CHARGED UPON CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity excepted and cried out against as a late novel doctrine. This a common charge: continued when Christianity had been some hundreds of years in the world. Christianity greatly prejudiced by this charge. Men loth to forsake the religion of their ancestors. What the Christians answered to it. Christian religion the same in substance and effect with that of the ancient Jews: in that respect, by far the oldest religion in the world: proved and urged by Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Eusebius, &c. Its lateness and novelty no real prejudice to rational and unbiassed men. The folly and vanity of adhering to absurd and unreasonable customs and principles, because ancient; and of refusing to change opinions for the better. An objection; if Christ and Christianity were so great blessings to mankind, why was it so long before God revealed them? Answered out of Arnobius.

This artifice proving weak and ineffectual, the next charge was its lateness and novelty; that it was an upstart sect, and but of yesterday's standing, not known in the world many years be-

fore; whereas the religion of the Gentiles had uncontrollably and almost universally obtained from ages and generations: a doctrine newly sprung up, and come, as it were, from a far country, προσφάτου ὁδεύοντος τοῦ κατ' ἡμᾶς λόγου, as it is in Theophilus Antiochenus:[s] a divorce, or rending themselves from the institutions of their ancestors, as Tertullian has it.[t] This charge begun betimes: when St. Paul preached at Athens, we find this the first thing charged upon him,[u] "that he was a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection:" and it was followed with a loud cry in succeeding times. You are wont to object to us, (says Arnobius,[x]) that our religion is novel, started up not many days ago; and that you ought not to desert your ancient way, and the religion of your country, to espouse barbarous and foreign rites. And Eusebius tells us,[y] the heathens were wont to reason thus: What strange profession of religion is this? What new way of life, wherein we can neither discern the rites amongst us used in Greece, nor amongst any sect of the Barbarians? Who can deny them to be impious, who have forsaken the customs of their fathers, observed before in all cities and countries, revolting from a way of worship which had been universally received from all ages, both by Greeks and Barbarians, entertained both in cities and villages, countenanced and approved by the common vote and consent of all kings, lawmakers, philosophers, and the greatest persons whatsoever? Nay, we may observe, that after Christianity had been settled for some hundreds of years in the world, and was become the prevailing religion, and had in a manner banished all others out of doors, and driven them into corners, yet this charge still continued. Thus Julian the emperor,[z] writing to the people of Alexandria concerning the Galileans, (so he was wont in scorn to call the Christians,) that he wondered that any of them durst dwell amongst them, or that they would suffer these despisers of the religion of their country to be in any place amongst them; calls Christianity, the new doctrine that had been preached to the world: the very same title which Lucian had also long since bestowed upon it,[a] where, speaking of our Saviour, he calls him the great man

[s] Ad Autolyc. l. iii. s. 4. [t] Ad Nation. l. i. c. 10. [u] Acts xvii. 18.
[x] Lib. ii. p. 40. [y] Prepar. Evang. l. i. c. 2. [z] Ep. li. oper. Jul. par. ii. p. 208.
[a] De mort. Peregrin. vol. ii. p. 762.

that was crucified in Palestine, who introduced that new religion into the world. So Symmachus,[b] some years after Julian, (a man no less eminent for his parts and eloquence than for his power and authority, being chief priest and prefect of Rome,) confidently owns to the emperors themselves, (though they were Christians,) that he did endeavour to defend the institutions of their ancestors, the settled rights and laws of the country, (he means them of religion,) that he designed to settle that state of religion, which for so many ages had been profitable to the commonwealth; and therefore begs of them, that what they had received when they were children, now they were old they might leave to their posterity; that they were to be true to the trust that had from so many ages been devolved upon them, and were to follow their parents, as they had happily done their ancestors that had gone before them. So he, pleading the cause of paganism from its antiquity and prescription, obliquely reflecting upon the novelism of Christianity; for more he durst not speak, the emperors (to whom he made his address) being themselves Christians. This, indeed, must needs be a mighty prejudice against the Christian religion at its first coming into the world; for all men, as they have a natural reverence for religion, so they have a great veneration for antiquity, the customs and traditions of their fathers, which they entertain as a most inestimable *depositum*, and for which they look upon themselves as obliged to contend, as for that which is most solemn and sacred. "What more excellent and venerable, (says the heathen in Minutius Felix,[c]) than to entertain the discipline of our forefathers; to solemnize that religion that has been delivered to us; to worship those gods, the knowledge of whom has been infused into us by our parents, not boldly to determine concerning the deities, but to believe those who have been before us." To the same purpose Lactantius,[d] speaking of the heathens: they go on (says he) most pertinaciously to maintain and defend the religion derived down to them from their ancestors; not so much considering what they are, as concluding them to be right and good, because the ancients conveyed them to them; nay, so great the power and authority of antiquity, that it is accounted a kind of impiety to question it, or inquire into it. Upon these

[b] Symmach. Epist. l. x. ep. 54. ad Valent. Theod. et Arcad.

[c] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 5.

[d] Lactant. l. ii. c. 6.

accounts the Gentiles bore so hard upon Christianity, beholding it as a mushroom sect, sprung up of a sudden, and as an encroaching inmate, undermining the established religions of the world.

Now we find two pleas especially which the Christians made to this indictment.

First, that the charge was not wholly and universally true: for besides that many principles of Christianity were the same with those of the law of nature, the Christian religion was for substance the same with that of the ancient Jews, whose religion claimed the precedency of all others in the world. That the religion was in substance and effect the same, is expressly asserted and proved by Eusebius.[e] The ancient patriarchs were the Christians of the old world, who had the same faith, religion, and worship common with us; nay, the same name too, as he endeavours to prove from that, "touch not mine anointed," *τῶν Χριστῶν μου*, "my Christs," or Christians. And how far superior in age they were to any thing that is recorded of the most ancient Gentiles, to their oldest writers, Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod, nay, to their very gods themselves, is sufficiently made good by many of the ancient fathers;[f] there being, at the easiest computation, between Moses and Homer, above six hundred years: nay, Cadmus (the first inventor of letters among the Grecians) was some ages junior unto Moses. Therefore Origen tells Celsus,[g] that Moses and the prophets were not only more ancient than Plato, but than Homer himself, yea, than the very invention of letters amongst the Grecians, who yet were as proud of their antiquity as any other nation in the world. Nay, whatever useful and excellent notions the great masters of religion amongst the heathens had amongst them, it is plain they borrowed, or, more truly, stole them, from the writings of the ancient Jews, as is abundantly demonstrated by Eusebius at large;[h] as before him it had been done by Clemens of Alexandria,[i] and by Tertullian[k] before them both; who shews, that all their poets and philosophers had drunk deep of the fountain of the prophets, and had forced their best doctrines and opinions

[e] Demonstr. Evang. l. i. c. 5.
[f] Vid. Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 17. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. i. c. 20.
[g] Adv. Cels. l. vi. s. 7. [h] Præpar. Evang. l. x. [i] Clem. Alex. Strom. l. i. c. 20.
[k] Tertull. Apol. c. 47. Vid. Theod. de curand. Græc. affect. Serm ii. de princip.

from thence, though subtilely altering and disguising them, to make them look more like their own. So that upon this consideration the accusation was unjust and false, and Christianity appears the oldest religion in the world.

Secondly; admit the Christian religion, in a more limited and restrained sense, to be of a far later standing than the religion of the Gentiles, yet they pleaded that it was infinitely reasonable that they should change for the better, whenever it offered itself to them; that novel truth was better than ancient error; and that they ought not to be eternally bound up in old and inveterate customs and principles, when those which were abundantly more reasonable and satisfactory were presented to them. "You tell us, (says Clemens Alexandrinus,[l]) that you may not subvert the customs received from your ancestors. But if so, why then are we not content without any other food than our mother's milk, to which we were accustomed when we first came into the world? Why do we increase or impair our estates, and not rather keep them at the same pitch, just as we received them from our fathers? Why have we left off those toys and sports to which we were wonted while infants and children, but only because years and discretion (although we had no other tutor) would make us quit those childish and trifling vanities?" That old age (says St. Ambrose[m]) has true cause to blush, that is ashamed to reform. It is not multitude of years, but the goodness of manners, that make gray hairs worthy of praise and honour: no age is too late to learn, nor is it shame to grow better. What wilt thou do, (says Lactantius to the heathen,[n]) wilt thou follow reason, or thy ancestors? If reason, then thou must needs relinquish the authority and institutions of thy forefathers, because that way only can be right that is warranted and prescribed by reason; but if piety towards thine ancestors sway with thee to follow them, thou must confess, both that they were fools in devoting themselves to a religion contrary to reason, and that thou thyself art unwise and simple in worshipping what thou art convinced to be false. Besides, that they had little reason to boast of those goodly ancestors to whom they adhered so close, and upon whose authority they did so much depend; as he goes on to demonstrate in the remaining part of that chapter. That

[l] Exhort. ad gent. c. 10.

[m] Ambr. ep. ii. contr. Symmach. inter ep. Symmach. p. 324. [n] Lactant. l. ii. c. 6.

you object to us the novelty of our religion, (so Arnobius,[o]) may we not charge some such fault upon the first and most ancient ages of the world, who at first lived in a very poor and mean state, but by little and little changed it into a more liberal and splendid course of life? Was it any crime that they changed their beasts' skins into more comely and convenient garments, or that they were no longer fond of their thatched cottages, or chose to dwell like wild beasts in rocks and caverns, when they had learnt to build better habitations? It is natural to all mankind to prefer better before what is worse, profitable before what is useless, and to seek after what we are assured is more grateful and excellent. Therefore, when you charge us with apostacy from the religion of the ancients, you should rather consider the cause than the action; and not so much upbraid us with what we have left, as examine what it is we have entertained. For if merely to change our opinion, and to pass from ancient institutions to what is more late and new, be a fault and crime, then none so guilty of the charge as yourselves, who have so oft changed your manners and course of life, and by embracing new rites and customs have condemned those that went before: which he there makes good by particular instances. And the same answer St. Ambrose gives to Symmachus: if nothing but ancient rites will please you, how comes it to pass that there has been a succession of new and foreign rites, even in Rome itself? of which he gives him many particular examples. In short, Ambrose wittily argues thus:[p] "Our way of religion (you say) is new, and yours ancient; and what does this either hurt our cause, or help yours? If ours be new, it will in time become old. Is yours old? there was a time when it was new. The goodness and authority of religion is not to be valued by length of time, but by the excellency of its worship; nor does it become us to consider so much when it begun, as what it is we worship."

It may not be impertinent in this place to take notice of what the heathens objected as a branch of this charge;[q] that if God's sending Christ into the world was so great a blessing, why did this Saviour of mankind come no sooner to reveal this religion, to lead men into the truth, to tell the world who this true God was, and to reduce us to the adoration of him? If so, why did

[o] Adv. gent. l. ii. p. 40, 41.

[p] Ubi supra.

[q] Arnob. adv. gent. l. ii. p. 43. Vid. Greg. Nyss. Orat. Catechet. c. 29. vol. ii. p. 521.

God suffer him to stay so long, and to be born (as it were) but a few hours before, in comparison of the preceding ages of the world? To this Arnobius answers, with a great deal of modesty and reason, that he could not tell; that it were easy to retort the same captious question upon them, if it were so much to the benefit of the world that Hercules, Esculapius, Mercury, &c. should be gods, why were they born and deified no sooner, that not only posterity but antiquity might have reaped advantage by them? If there was reason in one case, then there was also in the other: but to assign proper and particular reasons was not possible; it not being within the power of such a short-sighted creature as man is, to fathom the depth of the Divine counsels, or to discover by what ways or methods he disposes his affairs; these things being known only to him who is the grand Parent, the sovereign Lord and Governor of all things: that although we are not able to assign the cause why a thing comes to pass in this or that particular manner, yet this concludes never a whit the more that the thing is not so, or that it is less credible, when it has otherwise the most clear and unquestionable evidence and demonstration. More particularly he answers, that our Saviour cannot be said to have been lately sent in respect of God, because in respect of eternity there is nothing late; where there is neither beginning nor end, there can be nothing too soon, nothing too late. Time, indeed, is transacted by parts and terms, but these have no place in a perpetual and uninterrupted series of eternal ages. What if that state of things, to which he came to bring relief, required that season of time to come in? What if the condition of ancient and modern times were in this case not alike, or called for somewhat different methods of cure? It may be, the great God then chose to send Christ, when the state of mankind was more broken and shattered, and human nature become more weak and unable to help itself. This we are sure of, that if what so lately came to pass had been necessary to have been done some thousands of years ago, the Supreme Creator would have done it; or had it been necessary to have been done thousands of years hence, nothing could have forced God to have anticipated the settled periods of time one moment: for all his actions are managed by fixed and eternal reasons; and what he has once determined, cannot be frustrated by any change or alteration. And thus we see how easily, and

yet how satisfactorily, the primitive Christians wiped off that double imputation of impiety and novelty which the Gentiles had so undeservedly cast upon their religion.

CHAPTER III.

THINGS CHARGED UPON THE CHRISTIANS RESPECTING THEIR OUTWARD CONDITION.

The Christians looked upon, and despised by the Heathens, as a company of rude and illiterate persons, mechanics, silly women, and children. This charge considered and largely answered by Origen. Christianity provides for the truest and best knowledge: it excludes none, learned or unlearned. Christians not shy of communicating the knowledge of their mysteries to men sober and inquisitive. The efficacy of Christianity in prevailing upon men of the acutest parts and greatest learning. The Christians accused for being poor and mean. This charge (universally) false. Christianity entertained by persons of all sorts, of the highest as well as the lowest rank. Several instances of such: Fl. Clemens and Fl. Domitilla, (Domitian's near kindred,) Christians; another Domitilla, Domitian's niece, Acil. Glabrio the consul, Apollonius the senator, and others. Philip the emperor proved to be no Christian: the rise of the story, whence. Though Christianity had had no such persons under its profession, this had been no just reasonable prejudice. External pomp and grandeur not necessary to religion. The advantages Christians reaped from their meanness and contempt of the world. Of their being charged as a people useless and unserviceable to the public. This disowned. The opinion that it was not lawful for Christians to bear arms or offices, particular only to some persons and in some cases, and why. How much the world was beholden to Christians for reclaiming men from vice and wickedness. The gospel greatly instrumental that way; its general influence upon those whom it did not convert: the writings of philosophers generally better after Christianity appeared, and why. The excellent prayer of Simplicius. Christians very useful by frequent working beneficial miracles, curing diseases, raising the dead, dispossessing devils, &c. This miraculous power continued for several ages in the church. Christians further traduced as pernicious to the world, as the cause of all public evils and calamities. This objected at every turn. The occasion of St. Augustine's and Orosius's writing a vindication of it. This charge justly retorted upon the heathens, and they sent to seek the cause of public calamities nearer home. Some few hinted by Tertullian. Christians unjustly charged with it, because the world was pestered with such evils before Christianity appeared in it. The public state better and more prosperous since Christianity than before. Its prosperity ebbed or increased according to the entertainment Christianity found in the world.

The second sort of arts which the enemies of Christianity made use of, to render Christians vile and despicable, related to the circumstances of their external state and condition in the world, where two things were laid to their charge; that they gene-

rally were a very mean and inconsiderable sort of men, and that they were an useless and unserviceable people, nay, pernicious and mischievous to the world. They were looked upon as the lowest and meanest rank of men; persons neither considerable for their parts and learning, nor for their estates and quality. Inconsiderable they were accounted in respect of parts and learning: "you scorn and spit us out as rude and simple, and think that the treasury of all divine and excellent knowledge is open only to yourselves," as Arnobius tells them.[r] Thus Celsus objected,[s] that amongst the Christians no wise and learned men were admitted to the mysteries of their religion. Let no man come that is learned, wise, and prudent, for these things (says he) they account evil and unlawful; but if any be unlearned, an infant or an ideot, let him come and welcome; openly declaring, that none but fools, and such as are devoid of sense and reason, slaves, silly women, and little children, are fit disciples for the God they worship. We may observe (says he[t]) these trifling and mountebank impostors, bragging great things to the vulgar, not in the presence and company of wise men, (for that they dare not,) but wherever they espy a flock of boys, slaves, and weak simple people, there they presently crowd in and boast themselves. You shall see (as he goes on in this charge[u]) weavers, tailors, fullers, and the most rustic and illiterate fellows, at home when before their elders and betters as mute as fishes; but when they can get a few children and silly women by themselves, then who so wise and learned, who so full of talk, and so able to teach and instruct as they? Much to the same purpose Cecilius discourses in Minutius Felix,[x] that the Christians were men of a desperate and unlawful faction, who gathering a company out of the very dregs and refuse of the people, of silly, easy, credulous women, who by reason of the weakness of their sex are easily imposed and wrought upon, combine them into a wicked confederation: a people mute in public, but in corners talkative and full of prattle. Now to this part of the accusation Origen answers,[y] that it is for the main false, and proceeds from the spirit of malice and reproach. The sum of his answer, as he delivers it to the several parts of the charge, take thus: that the Christian doctrine invites and calls

[r] Adv. gent. l. iii. p. 49. [s] Orig. Contr. Cels. l. iii. s. 44. [t] Ibid. s. 50.
[u] Ibid. s. 55. [x] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 8. [y] Adv. Cels. l. iii. s. 44. et seq.

men to wisdom, as appears both from the writings of the Jews of old and the scriptures of the New Testament, wherein we find many singularly eminent for wisdom and learning, Moses, Solomon, Daniel, and such like of old; and the blessed Jesus made choice of such disciples, as whom he judged fittest to communicate the secrets of his religion to, and privately opened and explained to them, what he only delivered in parables and similitudes unto others; that he promised to send forth prophets,[z] wise men, and scribes, for the divulging and propagating of his doctrine; that St. Paul reckons wisdom and knowledge in the first rank of the gifts of God,[a] and that if he any where seem to reflect severely upon wisdom or human learning, (which probably may be the first rise of this charge,) he only censures the abuse, never intending to blame the thing itself; that when he prescribes the properties of a true bishop, or governor of the church, he requires this as one necessary qualification, "that he be apt to teach, and able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."[b] That we are so far from prohibiting any, that come who will, wise, learned, and prudent, provided the rude, simple, and unlearned be not excluded; for to them also the gospel does promise and provide a remedy, making them meet for God. That no man but must confess that it is an excellent thing to study the best arts and discipline; and that learning, the study of arts, and prudence, are so far from being an hinderance to the knowledge of God, that they mightily help it and advance it. That it is a great calumny to compare us to wandering impostors, who, by our reading and expounding the divine oracles, do only exhort the people to piety toward the great God, and to the rest of those virtues which are its individual companions; endeavouring to rescue men from a contempt of the Deity, and all brutish and irregular passions; a thing which the very best philosophers of them all could wish for. That Christians are so far from admitting any hand over head, that they first pre-examine the minds of those that desire to become their auditors; and having privately had trial of them before they receive them into the congregation, when they perceive them fully resolved to lead a pious and religious life, then they admit them in their distinct orders; some that are newly admitted, but not yet baptized; others that have given

[z] Matt. xxiii. 34. [a] 1 Cor. xii. 8. [b] Tit. i. 9.

some evidence and demonstration of their purpose to live as becomes Christians; amongst whom there are governors appointed to inspect and inquire into the life and manners of those who have been admitted, that they may expel and turn off those candidates of religion who answer not their profession, and heartily entertain those that do, and by daily converses build them up and make them better. That it is false to say that we apply ourselves only to women and children, and that in corners; when we endeavour what we can, by all means, to fill our societies with wise and prudent persons, and to such we open the more sublime and recondite principles of religion; otherwise accommodating our discourses to the capacities of meaner persons, who stand more in need of milk than strong meat: that we desire that all men may be trained up in the word of God, and that servants and children may have such instructions given them as are suitable and convenient to them; the ministers of our religion professing themselves to be debtors both to the Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise, that as much as may be they may outgrow their ignorance, and attain to the best kind of wisdom. And whereas we are accused to seduce and circumvent silly women and little children, and to draw them away from more weighty and serious counsels; let him produce any such, and inquire of them whether ever they heard better masters than ours? or if they did, why they would leave so grave a discipline, and suffer themselves to be seduced into a worse? But he will find no such thing to fasten upon us; but that, on the contrary, we reclaim women from immodesty, from falling out with their husbands and parting from them, from the wild extravagancies of the sports and theatres, and from all superstition whatsoever. The youth who are prone to vice and luxury, we restrain, by telling them, not only how base and degenerous a thing it is to indulge their lust, but into how much danger they precipitate their souls, and what punishments the divine vengeance lays up for such profligate offenders. We openly (not in corners) promise eternal happiness to those who live according to the rules of the divine law, who set God always before their eyes, and whatever they do, endeavour to approve themselves to him: and is this the discipline, these the doctrines of weavers, tailors, fullers, and the most rustic and illiterate persons? Surely, no. If at any time we refuse to produce our

instructions and counsels before masters of families or the doctors of philosophy, know, that if they be studious of virtue, enemies to vice, and such as breathe after the best things, before such we are most willing and ready to instruct our youth, being well assured we shall find them favourable judges. But if they be enemies to goodness and virtue, and opposers of sound wholesome doctrine, then if we hold our peace, no fault can justly be laid upon us; for in such circumstances the philosophers themselves would not discover the dictates and mysteries of their philosophy. This is the substance of the several answers which Origen pursues more at large through several pages: which, though very rational and satisfactory, yet we find something pleaded more direct and positive to the charge; viz. that although amongst the Christians (as it is in any society of men) the vulgar and more common sort might not be men of the sharpest understanding, or versed in the more polite arts of learning, yet wanted they not (and those no small number) great scholars, men of acute parts and raised abilities, such as had run through the whole circle of the sciences, who daily came over to them. So Arnobius,[c] urging the triumphant power and efficacy which the Christian faith had over the minds of men, Who (says he) would not believe it, when he sees in how short a time it has conquered so great a part of the world; when men of so great wit and parts, orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers, have thrown up those former sentiments, of which but a little before they were so tenacious, and have embraced the doctrines of the gospel? So fast did the Christian church fill with the most eminent professors of all parts of learning that were then known to the world.

Nor were the Christians of those times more despised upon the account of their weakness and ignorance, than they were for their meanness and poverty. They were looked upon as *de ultima fæce*, as the scum and refuse of the people, scarce a considerable man to be found amongst them. "See (says the Heathen in Minutius Felix[d]) the most and best of all your party are a poor, beggarly, hunger-starved generation, that have neither riches nor reputation to bear them out." This charge (however impertinent, seeing the goodness of any religion depends not upon the greatness of its professors) was yet as untrue as it was

[c] Adv. gent. l. ii. p. 21.

[d] Octav. c. 12.

unreasonable; the Christians having amongst them persons of the choicest place and quality, and after some years, the princes and potentates of the world, and even the emperors themselves struck sail to the sceptre of Christ. When Scapula, the president of Carthage, threatened the Christians with severe and cruel usage, Tertullian bids him bethink himself:[e] "What wilt thou do (says he) with so many thousands of men and women of every sex, age, and dignity, as will freely offer themselves? What fires, what swords, wilt thou stand in need of? What is Carthage itself like to suffer if decimated by thee; when every one shall find there his near kindred and neighbours, and shall see there matrons, and men perhaps of thy own rank and order, and the most principal persons, and either the kindred or friends of those who are thy own nearest friends? Spare them, therefore, for your own sake, if not for ours." And if there were persons of such quality in Africa, (so remote, and in a manner so barbarous a province,) what may we suppose there were in Rome itself, and other parts of the Roman empire? And in his Apology,[f] speaking of the vast spreading of the party, "Though (says he) we be men of quite another way, yet have we filled all places among you, your cities, islands, castles, corporations, councils, nay, your armies themselves, your tribes, companies, yea, the palace, the senate, and the courts of justice; only your temples we have left you free." Sure I am, Pliny,[g] in his letter to the emperor, tells him, that Christianity had not only overrun city and country, but that it had infected many of every sex, age, and order of men.

And indeed it were no hard matter, out of the ancient histories and martyrologies of the church, nay, from the heathen writers themselves, to prove that persons of the highest rank and quality (even in those times) embraced Christianity, and sealed it with their blood. Of which it may suffice to give an account only of some few. Not to insist upon the saints which St. Paul tells us were in Nero's palace, we find many considerable persons, and some of them near akin to the emperor, under the reign of Domitian, (that cruel prince, and persecutor of Christians,) entertaining the profession of the gospel. And first, let us hear the account which Dion Cassius,[h] the famous historian, gives us.

[e] Ad Scap. c. 4. [f] Cap. 37. [g] Lib. x. ep. 97.
[h] Lib. lxvii. in Domit. p. 776. ed. 1606.

He tells us, that, about the latter end of Domitian's reign, he condemned many, (some whereof were slain, others stripped of their estates,) and amongst the rest, Flavius Clemens the consul, his own cousin-german, and his wife Flavia Domitilla, near akin also to the emperor, upon pretence of atheism, (ἐπηνέχθη ἔγκλημα ἀθεότητος,) and for that they had embraced the rites and religion of the Jews. His nephew Clemens he put to death, his wife Domitilla he banished into the island Pandateria. Upon the same account also he put to death Acilius Glabrio, who, together with Trajan, had been consul the year before. That the persons here described were Christians, is plain, partly from the charge of atheism here fastened upon them, (the common and familiar accusation, and the title given to Christianity by the heathens, as we observed before,) and partly because they are said to have passed over to the rites and customs of the Jews, nothing being more ordinary in the historians of those times, than to mistake Christians for Jews, and to call them so, because both proceeding out of the same country, Christ himself and his apostles being Jews born, and his religion first published and planted there. And that which may give some more countenance to this is, that Suetonius,[i] speaking of Domitian's condemning this Fl. Clemens, represents him as a man *contemptissimæ inertiæ*, as a most contemptibly dull and sluggish person; which we know was generally charged upon the Christians, that they were an useless and unactive people, as we shall have occasion by-and-by more particularly to remark. Besides this Fl. Domitilla, the wife of Clemens, there was another of the same name, his niece by the sister's side, (unless Dion Cassius mistook, and put down wife for niece, which there is no reason to suppose, seeing both may very well consist together,) who (as Eusebius informs us[k]) was with many more banished by Domitian in the fifteenth year of his reign, into the island Pontia, and there put to death for the profession of Christianity; whose persecutions and martyrdoms (says he) are recorded by heathen writers themselves; amongst whom, (I suppose,) he principally intends Brettius, or Brutius, the historian, whom he cites elsewhere,[l] and out of whom he there quotes this very passage: "that under Domitian many of the Christians

[i] In Domitian. c. 15.

[k] Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 18.

[l] Can. Chron. ad Ann. Chr. 97. p. 208. et Chron. p. 80. edit. Græc.

suffered martyrdom, amongst whom was Fl. Domitilla, niece by the sister's side to Fl. Clemens the consul, who, for being a Christian, was banished, into the island Pontia." She is said, after a great deal of hard and tedious usage, to have been burnt, together with the house wherein she was; her memory is celebrated in the Roman Calendar upon the seventh of May.[m]

Besides these, we find that, Christianity getting ground under the quiet reign of the emperor Commodus, many of the greatest birth and fortunes in Rome, together with their whole families, flocked over to the Christian faith.[n] Amongst whom was Apollonius, a man famous for philosophy and all polite human literature, who so gallantly pleaded his cause before the senate, and was himself a senator, as St. Jerome informs us.[o] I shall but mention one instance more, and that is of Philip the emperor, whom Eusebius expressly affirms to have been a Christian,[p] and the first of the emperors that was so, followed herein by a whole troop, both of ancient and modern writers. Nay, we are told by some a formal story, that this Philip and his son were converted by the preaching of Pontius the martyr,[q] and baptized by Fabian bishop of Rome. But notwithstanding the smoothness of the story, and the number of authorities, I must confess it seems to me scarcely probable, that a person of so bad a life, guilty of such enormous villanies, as that emperor was, should either be, or be thought a Christian; or if he was, that the whole world should not presently ring of it. Certain I am, that all historians of that time are wholly silent in the case, nor is there the least intimation of any such thing in any writer, either Heathen or Christian, before Eusebius. Nay, Origen, who wrote his book in defence of Christianity under the reign of this very emperor, and about this very time, (nay, and two epistles, one to Philip, the other to his wife Severa, if we may believe Eusebius,) yet not only makes no mention of it, when it would have made greatly for his purpose, but tacitly implies there was no such thing. For Celsus reproving the boldness and petulancy of the Christians, as if they should give out, that if they could but bring over the present emperors to their religion, all other men would quickly be brought over;

[m] Martyr. Rom. ad 7 Maii.
[n] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 21.
[o] De Script. Eccl. in Apoll.
[p] Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 34.
[q] Act. Pont. apud Sur. ad 14 Maii.

Origen pointblank denies the charge, and tells him there is no need of any answer,[r] for that none of the Christians ever said so: an answer which surely he would not have given, had the emperor at that time been a Christian: not to insist upon many other intimations which might be produced out of that book against it. Besides, Eutropius reports,[s] that Philip and his son being slain by the soldiers, were yet *inter divos relati*, deified, or advanced into the number of their gods: an honour which it is certain the senate would not have done them, had they either been, or but suspected to have been Christians. To all which I may add, that Eusebius[t] himself (in whom the first footsteps of this story appear) builds it upon no better a foundation than a κατέχει λόγος, "a bare tradition and report." That which seems to have given both birth and colour to the story, is this: one Philippus,[u] an illustrious person under the emperor Severus, was a long time governor of Egypt; he, by the means of his daughter Eugenia, was converted to Christianity, under whose shelter the Christians there enjoyed great peace and favour; (nay, the story adds, though certainly without any ground, that he was created bishop of Alexandria;) till the emperor, being acquainted with his being a Christian, presently removed him, and, by the help of his successor Terentius, caused him to be secretly murdered and made away. This (if any thing) was the rise of the story; and that which makes it more probable is, the honour and excellency of that employment, the greatest of all the offices in the Roman empire, the command and state little less than regal; and therefore the emperors, in their letter to this Philip, (wherein they reproach him for ingratitude and apostacy,) tell him that in a manner he was made a king, when he was chosen president of Egypt. Accordingly, the title of the governor of Egypt (as appears from the historians, but especially the *Notitia Imperii*) was *præfectus Augustalis;* and how easy was it to mistake Philippus Augustus for Philippus Augustalis? But enough of this, as also the falseness of that charge that the Christians were such a sorry inconsiderable people.

But, however, let us suppose them to have been as mean and poor as the malice and cruelty of their adversaries did endeavour to make them, yet this was no real prejudice to their cause, nor

[r] Adv. Cels. l. viii. s. 71.
[s] Hist. Rom. l. ix. non longe ab init.
[t] Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 34.
[u] Martyr. Eugen. apud Sur. ad 25 Decemb.

any great hurt to them. "That the most part of us are accused to be poor, (says Octavius, in answer to Cæcilius's charge,) it is not our dishonour, but our glory; the mind, as it is dissolved by plenty and luxury, so it is strengthened and girt close by indigence and frugality; and yet how can that man be poor, who wants not, who is not greedy of what is another man's, who is rich in and towards God? That man is rather poor, who, when he has a great deal, desires more. The truth is, no man can be so poor as he was when he was born: the birds live without any patrimony entailed upon them, and the beasts find pastures every day; and yet these are born for our use, all which we fully enjoy when we do not covet them: much lighter and happier does he go to heaven who is not burdened by the way with an unnecessary load of riches. And yet did we think estates so useful to us, we could beg them of God, who, being Lord of all, might well afford a little to us; but we had rather despise them than enjoy them, and rather choose innocency and patience, desiring more to be good, than to be great and prodigal. If we endure outward sufferings and tortures, it is not so much pain as it is a warfare; our courage is increased by infirmities, and calamity is very oft the discipline of virtue; the nerves, both of body and mind, without exercise would grow loose and faint: and therefore God is neither unable to help us, nor yet negligent of us, as being the Governor of the world and the Father of his children; but tries and examines every one's temper in an adverse state, as 'gold is tried in the fire.' Besides, it must needs be a sight very pleasing to God, to behold a Christian conflicting with grief and misery, preparing himself to encounter threatenings and torments, pressing in upon the very noise of death and the horror of the executioner, maintaining his liberty against kings and princes, and only yielding to God, whose he wholly is, coming off from all the attempts of adversity with victory and triumph." So argues that excellent person, (and whoever reads him in his native language must confess it,) with equal strength of eloquence and reason; where he also briefly touches that objection so common amongst the heathens, that if Christians were so dear to God, why then did he suffer them to be oppressed with so many miseries and troubles, and not come in to vindicate and relieve them: an argument fully cleared by Arnobius, Lactantius, and other ancient apologists for the Christian faith.

But this was not all; they were charged as a very useless and unserviceable people, that contributed nothing to the happiness of the commonwealth ;[x] nay, as destructive and pernicious to human society, and as the procuring cause of all those mischiefs and calamities that befel the world. In answer to the first, their being useless as to the common good, hear what Tertullian says in the case. "How can this be, (says he,[y]) when we live amongst you, have the same diet, habit, manner, and way of life? We are no Brachmans or Indian Gymnosophists, who live in woods, and banish themselves from all civil life: we are not unmindful of what we owe to our great Creator, and therefore despise none of his creatures, though careful to use them with temperance and sobriety; wherefore we live not in the world without the use of your markets, shambles, baths, taverns, shops, stables, your marts, and other ways of human commerce; we go to sea with you, bear arms, till and improve the ground, use merchandise; we undergo trades amongst you, and expose our works to your use; and how then can we seem unserviceable to your affairs, with which and by which we live, I see not." "Certainly, (says he,[z]) if any have cause truly to complain of our being unprofitable, they are bawds, panders, pimps, hectors and ruffians, sellers of poison, magicians, soothsayers, wizards, and astrologers: and to be unserviceable to these, is the greatest serviceableness." But besides this, they pleaded for themselves, that their religion was highly beneficial to the world, and in its own nature contributed to the peace and happiness of mankind. It cannot be denied, but that some of the primitive Christians were shy of engaging in wars, and not very forward to undergo public places of authority and power; but (besides that this was only the opinion of some private persons, and not the common and current practice or determination of the church) it arose partly from some mistaken passages in the gospel, turning evangelical counsels into positive precepts; but principally because such offices and employments were usually clogged with such circumstances and conditions, as obliged them to some things repugnant to the Christian law; otherwise, where they could do it, without offering violence to their religion and their conscience, they shunned it not, but frequently bore arms, and discharged such public offices as were

[x] Arnob. adv. gent. l. ii. prop. fin. Lactant. de justit. l. v. c. 22.
[y] Apol. c. 42. [z] Ibid. c 43.

committed to them, as cannot be unknown to any that are never so little versed in the history of the first ages of the church; never were there better, more resolute and faithful soldiers, more obedient to the orders of their commanders, more ready to attempt the most hazardous enterprizes, never boggling at any thing which they could do without sin; of which, amongst many others, I shall instance only in that of the Thebæan legion,[a] who being commanded upon a bloody and unlawful butchery, to destroy and cut off the Christians, their brethren, meekly returned this answer to the heathen emperor Maximianus, under whom they served: "We offer our hands against any enemy, but count it unlawful to imbrue them in the blood of the innocent; our swords know how to strike a rebel or an enemy, but not to wound those who are citizens and guiltless: we remember that we took up arms for, not against friends and fellow-citizens: we have always fought for justice and piety, and the safety of the innocent; these have been hitherto the price of those dangers that we have run upon: we have fought for fidelity, which how shall we be able to keep to you, if we do not first keep it to our God?" So far were the Christians of those times from refusing to engage in the service of their prince. Nay, those of them who were so bound up by their private sentiments as not to think it lawful, yet reckoned they otherways made equivalent compensation. Thus when Celsus pressed the Christians to undergo public offices, and to help the emperors in their wars, Origen answers,[b] that they did so, though by a divine, not human help, by praying for their persons and their prosperity and success; "above all men (says he) we fight for the emperor, while we train ourselves in exercises of piety, and contend by prayers for him." But besides these, there were several other instances which the Christians pleaded to vindicate themselves from being unserviceable to the good of mankind, amongst which I shall at present take notice only of these two.

First, that they really sought to reclaim men from vice and sin, to a good and a virtuous life; by which means (besides that they provided for men's highest and nearest interest, the interest of their souls, and their eternal happiness in another life) they greatly consulted the peace and welfare of the places where they lived; for vicious and wicked men are the pests and plagues of

[a] Martyrol. Adonis ad 10 Kalend. Octob.

[b] Adv. Cels. l. viii. s. 73.

human society, that taint and infect others by their bad examples or persuasions, and entail vengeance upon the places of their residence; whilst good men engage the favour and blessing of heaven, and both by their counsels and examples bring over others to sobriety and virtue, whereby they establish and strengthen the foundations of government, and the happiness of civil life. And none so eminent for this as the Christians of old: this is the great triumphant argument wherewith Origen at every turn exalts the honour of Christianity;[c] this (says he) we find in the multitudes of those that believe, who are delivered from that sink of vices wherein they were wont to wallow: inquire into the lives of some of us,[d] compare our former and our present course, and you will find in what filthiness and impieties they tumbled before they entertained the Christian doctrine; but since the time that they entered into it,[e] how gentle and moderate, how grave and constant are they become, and some so inflamed with the love of purity, that they forbear even what lawfully they might enjoy; how largely are the churches of God, founded by Christ, spread over all nations, consisting of such as are converted from innumerable evil ways to a better mind. And elsewhere,[f] vindicating the doctrine of Christ from the mischievous cavils of his adversary, he tells us how it was impossible that could be pestilent and hurtful, which had converted so many from their vices and debaucheries to a course most agreeable to nature and reason, and to a life of temperance and all other virtues: and the same he urges frequently in other places; and what greater kindness and benefit could be done to men? Does Celsus call upon us (says he[g]) to bear offices for the good of our country? let him know, that the country is much more beholden to Christians than to the rest of men, while they teach men piety towards God, the tutelar guardian of the country, and shew them the way to that heavenly city that is above; which they that live well may attain to, though here they dwell in the smallest city in the world. Nor do the Christians thus employ themselves because they shun the public offices of the civil life;[h] but only reserve themselves for the more divine and necessary services of the church, in order to the good and happiness of men; for this they think very just and reasonable,

[c] Adv. Cels. l. i. s. 9. [d] Ibid. s. 26. [e] Ibid. s. 67.
[f] Lib. ii. s. 29. [g] Lib. viii. s. 74. [h] Ibid. s. 75.

that they should take care of all men: of them of their own party, that they may every day make them better; of others, that they may draw them to the belief and practice of piety and religion; that so worshipping God in truth, and doing what they can to instruct others, they may be united to the great God and to his blessed Son, who is the wisdom, truth, and righteousness, and by whom it is that every one is converted to a pious and a religious life.

Theodoret,[i] discoursing against the Gentiles, of the excellency of the laws of Christ above any that were given by the best philosophers or wisest men amongst the heathens, gives them instances of whole nations whom Christianity had brought off from the most brutish and savage manners: he tells them of the Persians, who, by the laws given them by Zarada, lived in incestuous mixtures with their own mothers, sisters, and daughters, looking upon it as a lawful and warrantable practice; till entertaining Christianity, they threw off those abominable laws, and submitted to that temperance and chastity which the gospel requires of us. And whereas before they were wont to cast out the bodies of their dead to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey, since they embraced the Christian religion they abstained from that piece of inhumanity, and decently committed them to the earth; from which they could not be restrained, either by the laws of their country, or the bitterness of those torments which they underwent. The Massagetes, who thought it the most miserable thing in the world to die any other than a violent death, and therefore made a law, that all persons arrived to old age should be offered in sacrifice and eaten, no sooner submitted to Christianity, but abhorred those barbarous and abominable customs. The Tibarens, who used to throw aged persons down the steepest rocks, left it off upon their embracing of the gospel. Upon the same account the Hyrcani and the Caspians reformed their manners, who were formerly wont to keep dogs on purpose to devour the bodies of the dead. Nor did the Scythians any longer, together with their dead, bury those alive who had been their nearest friends and kindred. "So great a change (says my author) did the laws of Christ make in the manners of men, and so easily were the most barbarous nations persuaded to entertain them; a thing which Plato, though

[i] De curand. Græc. affect. Serm. ix. de Leg. p. 128.

the best of all philosophers, could never effect amongst the Athenians, his own fellow-citizens, who could never induce them to govern the commonwealth according to those laws and institutions which he had prescribed them."

Nay, where the gospel did not produce this effect, to reclaim men from their vices and vanities, and to bring them over to the religion of the crucified Saviour, yet had it this excellent influence upon the world, that it generally taught them better lessons, refined their understandings, and filled their minds with more useful and practical notions about religion than they had before. To which purpose it is mainly observable, that those philosophers who lived in the time of Christianity, after the gospel publicly appeared in the world, wrote in a much more divine strain, entertained more honourable and worthy sentiments about God and religion, and the duties of men in their several capacities, than those of their sect that went before them: of which I conceive no account can be given so satisfactory as this, that the genius and spirit of the gospel began then to fly abroad, and to breathe in a freer air, and so could not but leave some tincture and savour upon the spirits of men, though its most inveterate enemies.[k] Besides that many of them did more nearly converse with the writings of Christianity, which they read either out of curiosity, or with a design to confute and answer them. This doubtless sharpened the edge of their understandings, and furnished them with better notions, more useful precepts and rules of life, than are to be met with in any of the old philosophers: witness those excellent and uncommon strains of piety that run through the writings of Seneca, Epictetus, Antoninus, Arrian, Plutarch, Hierocles, Plotinus, and the rest that lived in those first ages of the gospel; of which I could give considerable instances, were it necessary to my purpose. I shall, only as a specimen, set down that prayer wherewith Simplicius (enemy enough to Christianity) concludes his comment upon Epictetus: and thus he makes his address to God.

Ἱκετεύω σε, Δέσποτα, ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ἡγεμὼν τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγου, ὑπομνησθῆναι μὲν ἡμᾶς τῆς ἑαυτῶν εὐγενείας ἧς ἠξιώθημεν παρά

"I beseech thee, O Lord, thou that art the Father and Guide of our rational powers, grant that we may be mindful of those noble and generous natures with which thou

[k] Theod. de curand. Græc. affect. Serm. ii. de princip. p. 33.

σου, συμπράξαι δὲ ὡς αὐτοκινήτοις ἡμῖν πρός τε κάθαρσιν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων παθῶν, καὶ πρὸς τὸ ὑπερέχειν καὶ ἄρχειν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὡς ὀργάνοις κεχρῆσθαι κατὰ τὸν προσήκοντα τρόπον· Καὶ πρὸς διόρθωσιν ἀκριβῆ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγου καὶ ἕνωσιν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὰ ὄντως ὄντα διὰ τοῦ τῆς ἀληθείας φωτός. Καὶ τὸ τρίτον, τὸν σωτῆρα ἱκετεύω, ἀφελεῖν τελέως τὴν ἀχλὺν τῶν ψυχικῶν ἡμῶν ὀμμάτων, Ὄφρα γινώσκομεν εὖ (κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον) ἠ μὲν θεὸν, ἥδε καὶ ἄνδρα.

hast invested us; and assist us, that, as persons endued with self-moving principles, we may cleanse ourselves from all bodily and brutish passions, that we may subdue and govern them, and in a due and decent manner use them only as organs and instruments. Help us, through the light of the truth, accurately to correct our reason, and unite it to those things that have a real existence. And, in the third place, I beseech my Saviour, that he would perfectly dispel the mist that is before the eyes of our minds, that, according to that of the poet, we may rightly understand what belongs either to God or man."

Besides the matter of this prayer, which is very sublime and spiritual, the manner of its composure is considerable, consisting of three parts, and those addressed as it were to three persons, answerable to those in the blessed Trinity, the Lord, (or Father,) the Saviour, (or Christ,) and the light of truth, (which even in scripture is a common periphrasis of the Holy Spirit:) whether he intended this, I will not say; sure I am it looks very like it. But enough of this.

Secondly, that they ordinarily wrought such miracles as were incomparably beneficial to the world, in curing diseases, raising the dead, and rescuing possessed persons from the merciless rage and cruelty of the devil: we may observe, that in those primitive times there were innumerable multitudes of possessed persons, beyond what were in the ages either before or since; the Divine Providence doubtless permitting it to be so, that by this means there might be a fairer occasion of commending Christianity to the world; and there is nothing which we more commonly meet with in the writings of the ancient fathers, than testimonies concerning their triumphant power over evil spirits: Justin Martyr,[1] discoursing of the end of Christ's coming into the world, for the salvation of men and the subversion of devils, tells the senate,

[1] Apol. ii. s. 6.

"that these things are so, you may know by what is done before your eyes; for many that were possessed by devils, throughout the whole world, and even in this city of yours, whom all your enchanters, sorcerers, and conjurors were not able to cure, many of us Christians, adjuring them by the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have perfectly cured, and do still cure, disarming and driving out of men those demons that had seized upon them;" and the same he affirms more than once and again in his discourse with Trypho the Jew. Irenæus,[m] arguing against the heretics, tells us, that the true disciples of Christ did, in his name, many strange things for the good of others, according as every one had received his gift; some so signally expelling devils, that those out of whom they were cast came over to the faith; others foretelling future events; others curing men of the most grievous distempers, by putting their hands upon them, and restoring them to their former health: many that have been raised from the dead, and afterwards lived many years amongst us. And, indeed, innumerable (says he) are the gifts which God has every where bestowed upon his church, whereby, in the name of the crucified Jesus, many and great miracles are daily done, to the great advantage of the world. Tertullian[n] appeals to the heathens, as a thing commonly known amongst them, that they daily restrained the "power of devils," and cast them out of men. And he tells Scapula,[o] the president, that he might be satisfied of this from his own records, and those very advocates who had themselves reaped this benefit from Christians; as, for instance, a certain notary, and the kinsman, and child of another; besides divers other persons of note and quality, (not to speak of the meaner sort,) who had been recovered either from devils or from desperate diseases. Nay, Severus, the father of Antoninus, having been cured by being anointed with oil by Proculus, a Christian, he kept him in his palace till his death; whom Antoninus knew well, having been himself nursed by a Christian. And in his Apology he challenges the heathens to produce any possessed person before the public tribunals, and the evil spirit, being commanded by any Christian, shall then as truly confess himself to be a devil, as at other times he falsely boasts himself to be a god. And elsewhere,[p] putting the case that the Christians

[m] Adv. Hæres. l. ii. c. 32. s. 4. [n] Ad Scap. c. 2. [o] Ibid. c. 4. [p] Apol. c. 37.

should agree to retire out of the Roman empire, he asks them what protection they would then have left against the secret and invisible attempts of devils, who made such havoc both of their souls and bodies, whom the Christians so freely expelled and drove out; that it would be a sufficient piece of revenge, that hereby they should leave them open to the uncontrolled possession of those evil spirits. It were endless to produce all the testimonies of this nature, that might be fetched from Origen, Minutius Felix, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Eusebius, and all the old apologists for the Christian religion, (some whereof I have briefly noted in the margin,[q]) who constantly pleaded this as a mighty and uncontrollable argument of the truth and divinity of their religion, and of their great usefulness to mankind; nay, this miraculous power continued in the church some considerable time after Constantine and the world was become Christian, as appears from St. Basil, Nazianzen, and others:[r] and though I do not give heed to all the miracles which are reported by St. Jerome in the lives of Hilarion, Paulus, and some others, or by Palladius in his Historia Lausiaca, yet doubtless many of them were very true and real; God withdrawing this extraordinary power as Christianity gained faster footing in the world, and leaving the church to those standing methods by which it was to be managed and governed to the end of the world.

And yet notwithstanding the case was thus plain and evident, how much the world was beholden to Christians, yet were they looked upon as the pests of human society, counted and called the "common enemies of mankind," as Tertullian[s] complains; that they were the causes of all public calamities, and that for their sakes it was that vengeance did so often remarkably haunt the Roman empire. This was the common outcry: if the city be besieged, (says Tertullian,[t]) if any thing happen ill in the fields, in the garrisons, in the islands, presently they cry out, "It is because of the Christians."[u] They conspire the ruin of

[q] Orig. contr. Cels. l. i. s. 1. 6. 67; l. iii. s. 24; l. vii. s. 4. 67. Cypr. ad Donat. p. 5. ad Demetrian. p. 188. 192. Min. Fel. Octav. c. 27. Arnob. adv. gent. l. i. p. 13. Lact. de orig. error. l. ii. c. 15. Euseb. demonstr. Evang. l. iii. p. 132.

[r] Naz. Orat. i. Apol. p. 35. August. de Civ. Dei. l. xxii. c. 8. Greg. Nyss. Orat. in suam ordinat. vol. i. p. 876. Athanas. de incarn. Verb. s. 48.

[s] Apol. c. 37. [t] Ibid. c. 1. [u] Ibid. c. 40.

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good men, and thirst after the blood of the innocent, patronizing their hatred with this vain pretence, that the Christians are the cause of all public misfortunes and calamities. If Tiber overflow the walls, if the Nile do not (as it is wont) overflow the fields, if the heaven do not keep its accustomed course, if an earthquake happen, if a famine, or a plague, presently the cry is, "Away with the Christians to the lions." Thus Demetrian, the proconsul of Africa, objected to St. Cyprian,[x] that they might thank the Christians that wars did oftener arise, that plagues and famines did rage so much, and that immoderate and excessive rains hindered the kindly seasons of the year. The same Arnobius tells us,[y] the heathens were wont to object at every turn, and to conclude it as sure as if it had been dictated by an oracle, that since the Christians appeared in the world, the world had been well-nigh undone, mankind has been overrun with infinite kinds of evils, and the very gods themselves had withdrawn that solemn care and providence wherewith they were wont to superintend human affairs. Nay, so hot and common was this charge amongst the Pagans, that when the Goths and Vandals broke in upon the Roman empire, St. Augustine[z] was forced to write those excellent books, *De Civitate Dei*, purposely to stop the mouth of this objection; as upon the same account and at his request, Orosius[a] wrote his seven books of History against the Pagans. Omitting some of the answers given by the fathers, (as being probably less solid, and not so proper in this case; such as, that it was no wonder if miseries happened, and things grew worse in this old age of time, the world daily growing more feeble and decrepid; and that these things had been foretold by God, and therefore must necessarily come to pass; two arguments largely and strongly pleaded by St. Cyprian,[b] that those evils were properly resolvable into natural causes; and that every thing is not presently evil, because it crosses our ease and interest, as Arnobius answers.[c] Passing by these), I shall take notice only of two things which the Christians pleaded in this case.

First, that the Gentiles should do very well to seek the true causes of these things nearer home, and to inquire whether it

[x] Cypr. ad Demetr. p. 187.
[z] Aid. Retractat. l. ii. c. 43.
[b] Ad Demet. 188.
[y] Arnob. adv. gent. l. i. p. 1.
[a] P. Oros. Præf. ad lib. Hist. ad D. Aug.
[c] Arnob. adv. gent. l. i. p. 4.

was not for their own sakes that the Divine Providence was thus offended with them; there being very just reasons to think so. Tertullian[d] points them to such causes as these: first, their horrible affronting their natural notions of God, that "when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, and they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things;"[e] as St. Paul had told them long before: and that therefore it was reasonable to suppose,[f] that God was more angry with them, who, instead of him, worshipped pieces of wood and statues, or at best genii and devils, than with those who sincerely paid their adorations to him alone. Secondly, passing by God, the great Master of all goodness and innocence, and the severe revenger of all impiety, they tumbled themselves in all manner of vice and wickedness; and what wonder if the divine justice followed close at their heels? "You are angry (says Cyprian[g]) that God is angry, as if in living ill you deserved well, and as if all that has happened to you were not less and lighter than your sins. And thou, Demetrian, who art a judge of others, be in this a judge of thyself; inspect the retirements of thy conscience, and behold thyself now, who shalt one day be seen naked by all, and thou wilt find thyself enslaved and led captive by some sins or other; and why then shouldst thou wonder that the flames of the divine anger should rise higher, when the sins of men do daily administer more fuel to it?" An answer which he there prosecutes to very excellent purpose. Thirdly, their prodigious unthankfulness to God for all the former blessings they had received from him. So far as they were ungrateful, they were highly guilty, and God could not but punish them. Had they sought him, whom in part they could not but know, and been observant of him, they would in this case have found him a much more propitious than an angry Deity, as Tertullian tells them. Upon these and such like accounts they might well conclude it was, that the vengeance of God did press so hard upon them, and that therefore they had no true reason to lay the fault at any other door but their own.

[d] Apol. c. 40.

[e] Rom. i. 21—23.

[f] Apol. c. 41. Vid. Arnob. l. i. p. 6, 7.

[g] Ad Demetr. 189, 190.

Secondly, as to the thing itself, as it was charged upon them, they pointblank denied it to be true, and that for two reasons especially.

First, because the world had been sadly and frequently pestered with such evils and miseries long before the Christian religion appeared in it. "I pray, (says Tertullian,[h]) what miseries did overwhelm all the world, and even Rome itself, before the times of Tiberius, i. e. before the coming of Christ? Have we not read of Hierapolis, and the islands of Delos, and Rhodes, and Cos, destroyed, with many thousands of men? Does not Plato speak of the greatest part of Asia and Africa swallowed up by the Atlantic sea? An earthquake drank up the Corinthian sea, and the force of the ocean rent off Sicilia from Italy. Not to ask, where were the Christians, the great contemners of your gods, but where were your gods themselves, when the flood overran the world? Palestine had not yet received the Jewish nation out of Egypt, much less had the Christians sat down there when Sodom and Gomorrah, and the adjacent parts, were burnt up by a shower of fire and brimstone, of which the country smells to this day. Nor could Tuscia and Campania complain of the Christians, when a fire from heaven destroyed the Vulsinii and the Pompeii. None, as yet, worshipped the true God at Rome, when Hannibal at Cannæ made such a slaughter of the Romans, that the very rings that he took (which were the honourable badges of none but Roman knights) were measured by the bushel. They were all your gods that then had the general worship, when the Gauls took the capitol itself." So smartly does that grave man retort their own arguments upon themselves. Arnobius fully and elegantly pursues this;[i] that, in this respect, the former times were no better than these, which they so much complained of, and bids them run over the annals and records that were written in all languages, and they would find that all nations had frequently had their common miseries and devastations. The clearing of which was likewise the great design Orosius proposed to himself,[k] in drawing down the history of the world through all the ages and generations of it.

Secondly, because since the coming of Christianity, the world had been in a better and more prosperous state than it was

[h] Apol. c. 40. [i] Lib. i. p. 2, 3. [k] Præfat. ad lib. Hist. ad August.

before, especially whenever the Christian religion met with any favour and encouragement. The reason of it Tertullian gives:[l] "although we should compare present with former miseries, yet they are much lighter now, since God sent Christians into the world; for since then, innocency has balanced the iniquities of the age, and there have been many who have interceded with heaven." The author of the Questions and Answers in Justin Martyr,[m] (for that it was not Justin himself, I think no man can doubt that reads him, the man betraying himself openly enough to have lived in the times of prevailing Christianity,) putting this question, Whether Paganism was not the better religion, forasmuch as under it there was great prosperity and abundance? whereas it was quite otherwise since Christianity came in fashion: he answers, among other things, that (besides that plenty was no argument of the goodness of any religion, Christians being to be judged of rather by the holiness than the prosperity of their religion) that there was so much the more abundance in these times of Christianity, by how much there were fewer wars than there were while Paganism governed the world. Never were wars more successfully managed, never was prosperity more triumphant, than when Christians met with kind entertainment. Melito, bishop of Sardis, in an oration which he presented to the emperor M. Antoninus in behalf of the Christians, (part whereof is yet extant in Eusebius,[n]) tells him, that Christianity commencing under the reign of Augustus was a good omen of the prosperity of the empire, and that ever since the majesty of the Roman empire had increased: of whom he being the heir and successor, he could not better assure it to himself and his son, than by protecting that religion that had been born and bred up together with the empire, and for which, his ancestors, amongst other religions, had had an esteem and honour; that there could be no better argument that this religion contributed to the happiness of the empire, (with which it began and had grown up,) than that since the reign of Augustus no misfortune, but, on the contrary, (according to all men's wishes,) every thing had happened to be magnificent and prosperous. Hence Eusebius notes,[o] once and again, that the affairs of the empire commonly flourished while Christianity was protected; but when that was persecuted,

[l] Apol. c. 40. [m] Quæst. 126. [n] Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 2. 6.
[o] Vid. ibid. l. vii. c. 1; l. viii. c. 13. De Martyr. Palest. c. 3.

things began to go to rack, and their ancient peace and prosperity could not be retrieved till peace and tranquillity was restored to the Christians. Therefore Cyprian tells the proconsul,[p] that their cruelty to the Christians was one of those crying sins that had provoked God to inflict so many heavy miseries upon them; not only refusing to worship God themselves, but unjustly persecuting those innocent persons that did, with all the methods of rage and fierceness. So little hand had the Christians in entailing vengeance upon the world, that their enemies rather wilfully pulled it down upon their own heads.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST THEM RESPECTING THEIR LIFE AND MANNERS.

The primitive Christians accused of the grossest sins, sacrilege, sedition, treason, incest, murder, &c. The particular consideration of these referred to their proper places. What they offered in the general for their vindication considered. They openly asserted their innocency, and appealed to the known piety of their lives. None accounted Christians, however eminent in profession, unless their lives answerable. Their abstaining from appearance of evil, or doing any thing that symbolized with the idolatrous rites of the heathens. Their being willing to be brought to the strictest trial, and to be severely punished, if found guilty of those crimes. Their complaints of being (generally) condemned merely for bearing the name of Christians. They greatly gloried in that title. This name prohibited by Julian, and Christians commanded in scorn to be called Galileans. The Christians appealed for their vindication to the consciences of their impartial enemies, and by them acquitted. The testimonies of Pliny, Ser. Granianus, Antoninus Pius, M. Antoninus, Trypho the Jew, and Apollo's oracle to this purpose. The excellency of Christians, if compared with the best of heathens. All such disowned for Christians as did not exactly conform to the rule and discipline of Christianity.

All the attempts that had been hitherto made against the honour and reputation of Christians, seemed but like the first skirmishings of an army, in respect of the main battalia that was yet behind, the charge that was made against their moral carriage and behaviour: and here they were accused at every turn of no less than sacrilege, sedition, and high treason; of incest and promiscuous mixtures; of murder, and eating the flesh of infants at their sacramental feasts. These were sad and

[p] Ad Demet. p. 190.

horrid crimes, and (had they been true) would justly have made Christianity stink in the nostrils of all sober and considering men: but they were as false as they were black and hellish. The particular answers to these charges (together with some things relating to matters of worship) shall be considered hereafter, according as they fall in their more proper places: I shall only at present take notice of the general vindication which the Christians made of themselves, from these indictments that were brought in against them; and the sum of what they pleaded lies especially in these three things.

First, they did openly assert and maintain their innocency, and shew by their lives, as well as their Apologies, that they were men of quite another make and temper than their enemies did generally represent them. Their religion and way of life was admired by all. "Who (says St. Clement to the Corinthians [q]) did ever dwell amongst you, that did not approve of your excellent and unshaken faith? that did not wonder at your sober and moderate piety in Christ? You were forward to every good work, adorned with a most virtuous and venerable conversation, doing all things in the fear of God, and having his laws and commands written upon the tables of your hearts." They placed religion then not in talking finely, but in living well. "Amongst us, (says Athenagoras,[r]) the meanest and most mechanic persons, and old women, although not able to discourse and dispute for the usefulness of their profession, do yet demonstrate it in their lives and actions: they do not indeed critically weigh their words, and recite elegant orations, but they manifest honest and virtuous actions; while being buffetted they strike not again, nor sue them at law that spoil and plunder them; liberally give to them that ask, and love their neighbours as themselves. And this we do, because we are assured that there is a God that superintends human affairs, who made both us and the whole world; and because we must give to him an account of all the transactions of our lives, therefore we choose the most moderate, humane, and benign, and (to many) the most contemptible course of life; for we reckon that no evil in this life can be so great, though we should be called to lay down our lives, which ought to be esteemed little and of no value in comparison of that happiness which we hereafter

[q] Clem. ep. ad Corinth. s. 1.

[r] Leg. pro Christ. s. 11.

look for from the great Judge of the world, promised to those who are of an humble, benign, and moderate conversation." Clemens of Alexandria [s] gives us this short account of them: "As the fairest possession we give up ourselves to God, entirely loving him, and reckoning this the great business of our lives. No man is with us a Christian, or accounted truly rich, temperate, and generous, but he that is pious and religious; nor does any further bear the image of God, than he speaks and believes what is just and holy. So that this, in short, is the state of us who follow God: such as are our desires, such are our discourses; such as are our discourses, such are our actions; such as are our actions, such is our life: so universally good is the whole life of Christians." Certainly none were ever greater enemies to a naked profession, and the covering a bad life under the title of Christianity. Do any live otherwise than Christ hath commanded, it is a most certain argument they are no Christians, though with their tongues they never so smoothly profess the Christian doctrine; for it is not mere professors, but those who live according to their profession, that shall be saved, as Justin Martyr declares before the emperors: [t] "Let no man (says Basil [u]) impose upon himself with inconsiderate words, saying, 'Though I be a sinner, yet I am a Christian, and I hope that title will be my shelter.' But hearken, sinner, all wicked men shall be bundled up together, and in the great day of the divine vengeance shall be indifferently thrown into those merciless and devouring flames."

Nay, so careful were they to avoid all sin, that they stood at a wide distance from any thing that (though lawful in itself, yet) seemed to carry an ill colour with it. This, Origen [x] tells Celsus, was the reason why they refused to do any honour to an image, lest thereby they should give occasion to others to think that they ascribed divinity to them. For this reason they shunned all community with the rites and customs of the heathens, abstaining from things strangled, or that had been offered to idols, from frequenting the public baths, or going to the sights and shows, because they seemed to owe their original to idolatry, and were the occasion of many gross enormities. They refused to wear crowns of laurel, lest they should seem to

[s] Cohort. ad gent. c. 12.
[t] Apol. i. s. 16.
[u] Comment. in c. i. Esai. s. 64.
[x] Lib. vii. s. 6.

patronise the custom of the Gentiles, who were wont to do so in their sacred and solemn rites; as appeared eminently in the solemnities of the emperors Severus and Caracalla, when the tribune delivered the donative to the soldiers, and all came to receive it with crowns upon their heads, one of them brought his in his hand, and being demanded the reason, answered that he was a Christian and could not do it: which was the occasion of Tertullian's book *De Corona Militis*, wherein he sets himself to defend it.

Secondly, they were willing to put themselves upon the strictest trial, and to undergo the severest penalties, if found guilty of those crimes that were charged upon them. So their apologist bespeaks the emperor:[y] "We beseech you (says he) that those things that are charged upon the Christians may be inquired into, and if they be found to be so, let them have their deserved punishment, nay, let them be more severely punished than other men; but if not guilty, then it is not reasonable that innocent persons should suffer merely upon report and clamour." And speaking of those that only took sanctuary at the name of Christians, he adds, that those who lived not according to the laws of Christ, and were only called by his name, they begged of them that such might be punished. To the same purpose, Athenagoras,[z] in his embassy, taking notice how their enemies laid wait for their lives and fortunes, loaded them with heaps of reproaches, charging them with things that never so much as entered into their minds, and of which their accusers themselves were most guilty, he makes this offer: "Let but any of us be convict of any crime, either small or great, and we refuse not to be punished, nay, are ready to undergo the most cruel and heavy penalty; but if we be only accused for our name, (and to this day all our accusations are but the figments of obscure and uncertain fame, no Christian having ever been convict of any fault,) then we hope it will become such wise, gracious, and mighty princes as you are, to make such laws as may secure us from those wrongs and injuries." But, alas! so clear was their innocency, that their bitterest adversaries durst not suffer them to come to a fair open trial. "If you be so certain that we are guilty, (says Tertullian to the heathens,[a]) why then are we not treated in the same nature with all male-

[y] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 3. [z] Leg. pro Christ. s. 2. [a] Apol. c. 2.

factors, who have leave both by themselves and their advocates to defend their innocency, to answer and put in pleas, it being unlawful to condemn any before they be heard, and have liberty to defend themselves? Whereas Christians only are not permitted to speak any thing that might clear their cause, maintain the truth, and make the judge able to pronounce righteous sentence. It is enough to justify the public odium, if we do but confess ourselves Christians, without ever examining of the crime; contrary to the manner of procedure against all other delinquents, whom it is not enough barely to charge to be murderers, sacrilegious, or incestuous, or enemies to the public, (the titles you are pleased to bestow upon us,) unless they also take the quality of the fact, the place, manner, time, partners, and accessories under examination. But no such favour is shewn to us, but we are condemned without any inquisition passed upon us." And good reason there was that they should take this course, seeing they could really find nothing to condemn them for, but for being Christians. This one would think strange, especially amongst a people so renowned for justice and equity as the Romans were, and yet in these times nothing more ordinary. Therefore when Urbicius, the prefect of Rome, had condemned Ptolomæus merely upon his confessing himself a Christian,[b] one Lucius, that stood by, cried out, "What strange course is this, what infamous misdemeanor is this man guilty of, that when he is no adulterer, fornicator, no murderer, no thief nor robber, thou shouldst punish him only because he calls himself a Christian? Certainly, Urbicius, such justice as this does not become the piety of the emperor, or the philosophy of Cæsar his son, or the sacred and venerable senate." And Tertullian tells us,[c] it was the common accusation they had in their mouths, "such or such a one is a good man, only he is a Christian;" or, "I wonder at such a one, a wise man but lately turned Christian." So Cyprian,[d] I remember, reduces his adversary to this unavoidable dilemma: "choose one of these two things; to be a Christian, either is a fault, or it is not: if it be a fault, why dost thou not kill every one that confesses it? if it be not, why dost thou persecute them that are innocent?" Hence we find nothing more common in the old apologists, than complaints concerning the unreasonableness of being accused, condemned,

[b] Just. Mart. Apol. ii. s. 2. [c] Apol. c. 3. [d] Ad Demet. p. 190.

and punished, merely for their name, this being the first and great cause of all that hatred and cruelty that was exercised towards them:[e] it was the innocent name that was hated in them; all the quarrel was about this title; and when a Christian was guilty of nothing else, it was this made him guilty, as Tertullian complains at every turn. The truth is, they mightily gloried in this title, and were ambitious to own it in the face of the greatest danger: therefore when Attalus,[f] the famous French martyr, was led about the amphitheatre, that he might be exposed to the hatred and derision of the people, he triumphed in this, that a tablet was carried before him with this inscription: THIS IS ATTALUS THE CHRISTIAN.[g] And Sanctus (another of them) being oft asked by the president what his name was, what his city and country, and whether he was a freeman or a servant? answered nothing more to any of them than that he was a Christian, professing this name to be country, kindred, and all things to him. Nay, so great was the honour and value which they had for this name, that Julian the emperor, (whom we commonly call the Apostate,) endeavoured by all ways to suppress it, that when he could not drive the thing, he might at least banish the name out of the world; and therefore did not only himself constantly call Christians Galileans,[h] but made a law that they should be called only by that name. But to return: the sum is this, the Christians were so buoyed up with the conscience of their innocency, that they cared not who saw them, were willing and desirous to be scanned and searched to the bottom, and to lie open to the view of all; and therefore desired no other favour than that that Apology which Justin Martyr presented to them,[i] might be set out with the decree of the senate, that so people might come to the true knowledge of their case, and they be delivered from false suspicions, and those accusations, for which they had been undeservedly exposed to so many punishments.

Thirdly, they appealed for their vindication to the judgment and consciences of their more sober and impartial enemies, and were accordingly acquitted by them, as guiltless of any heinous

[e] Vid. Tertull. Apol. c. 1—3. Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 4, 24. Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 2.

[f] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 1.

[g] Id. ibid.

[h] Greg. Naz. Invect. in Julian. i. p. 81.

[i] Apol. ii. s. 14.

crimes. Pliny the Younger,[k] being commanded by the emperor Trajan to give him an account of the Christians, tells him, "that after the best estimate that he could take, and the strictest inquisition that he could make by tortures, he found no worse of them than this: that they were wont to meet early for the performance of their solemn devotions, and to bind themselves under the most sacred obligations to commit no vice or wickedness; and that their religion was nothing else but an untoward and immoderate superstition." This is the testimony which that great man (who, being proconsul of Bithynia, was capable to satisfy himself, and who was no less diligent to search into the matter) gives concerning them. Next after him, Serenus Granianus,[l] (the proconsul of Asia,) writes to the emperor Adrian, Trajan's successor, to represent to him how unjust it was to put Christians to death, when no crime was duly laid to their charge, merely to gratify the tumultuous clamours of the people: to whom the emperor answers, that they should not be unjustly troubled; that if any thing was truly proved against them, he should punish them according to the nature of the fault; but if done out of malice or spite, he should then accordingly punish the accuser as a calumniator. Next to Adrian, Antoninus Pius,[m] (if he be not mistaken for his successor Marcus,) in his epistle to the commons of Asia, tells them, that they had traduced the Christians, and had objected those crimes to them which they could not prove; that they were more firm and undaunted in their profession than themselves, and had a greater freedom with and confidence towards God; and that therefore he resolved to ratify and follow the determination of his father. After him comes M. Antoninus, who, having obtained that famous and signal victory against the Quades in Germany, confesses in his letter to the senate,[n] (which letter, though I know it is questioned by some learned men, as now extant, whether true and genuine, yet that there was such a letter is evident enough from Tertullian,[o] who himself lived within a few years of that time, and appeals to it,) that it was clearly gotten by the prayers of the Christian legion which he had in his army, and therefore commands that none be molested for being Christians; and that if any accuse a Christian for being such, without a sufficient

[k] Epist. l. x. ep. 97.
[l] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 8, 9.
[m] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 70.
[n] Ibid. s. 71.
[o] Apol. c. 5. et ad Scap. c. 4.

crime proved against him, he shall be burnt alive for his accusation: that a Christian, confessing himself to be one, shall be safe and secure, and that the governor of the province shall not drive him to renounce his profession; and this he commands to be confirmed by the decree of the senate. So clear did the Christians appear to their greatest enemies, especially in their more calm and sober intervals. Nay, Trypho the Jew (and that very notion speaks him enemy enough, yet) confesses them clear of those foul aspersions; for when the Martyr had asked him,[p] whether he disliked the Christians' manners and way of life, and whether he really believed that they eat men's flesh, and putting out the candles ran together in promiscuous mixtures? the Jew answered, that those things, whereof they were accused by many, were unworthy of belief, as being so extremely abhorrent to human nature; and that the precepts which are commanded in their gospel (which his curiosity had prompted him to read) were so great and admirable, that he supposed no man could be able to keep and obey them. And, to instance in no more, the heathen oracle itself pronounced in favour of the Christians;[q] for Apollo giving forth his oracles, not, as he was wont, by human voice, but out of a dark and dismal cavern, confessed it was because of just men that lived upon the earth; and when Dioclesian inquired who those just men were, one of the heathen priests, that stood by, answered, that they were the Christians. This Constantine the Great tells us he himself heard, being then a young man, and in company at that time with the emperor Dioclesian, and he there solemnly calls God to witness for the truth of the story.

From all which it appears how innocent the Christians were of those things which the Gentiles charged upon them, how infinitely strict and unblamable in their lives, and therefore triumphed over the heathens in the purity and innocency of their conversations. Origen tells Celsus,[r] that the churches of God which had taken upon them the discipline of Christ, if compared to the common societies of men, were amongst them like lights in the world. "For who (says he) is there, but he must needs confess that the worser part of our church is much better than the popular assemblies? as for instance; the church

[p] Just. Mart. dial. cum Tryph. s. 10.
[q] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. ii. c. 50, 51.
[r] Lib. iii. s. 29.

of God at Athens is meek and quiet, as endeavouring to approve itself to the great God; whereas now the popular assembly of Athens is seditious and tumultuous, and no ways to be compared with the church of God in that city. And the same may be said of the churches of God, and the vulgar assemblies which are at Corinth or Alexandria." So Minutius Felix:[s] "Should we Christians be compared with you, although our discipline may seem somewhat inferior, yet we should be found infinitely to transcend you. You forbid adultery, and then practise it; we keep entirely to our own wives. You punish wickedness when committed; with us, even a wicked thought is sin: you stand in awe of those who are conscious of your crimes; we of nothing but our consciences, without which we cannot be. And last of all, it is with your party that the prison is filled and crowded: no Christian is there, unless such a one as is either a shame to his religion, or an apostate from it." And a little after he tells his adversary,[t] how much they exceeded the best philosophers, who were filthy and tyrannical, and only eloquent to declaim against those vices of which themselves were most guilty: that we Christians do not measure wisdom by men's habits, but by their minds and tempers, and do not speak great things, but live them; having this to boast of, that we really attain to those things which they earnestly sought, but could not find. Thus Lactantius,[u] having excellently discoursed of the prodigious debaucheries and wickednesses of the heathens: "But which of these things (says he) can be objected to our people, whose whole religion is to live 'without spot or blemish?' from whence they might easily gather, had they any understanding, that piety is on our side, and that they themselves are vile and impious." And Eusebius tells us,[x] that in his time the Christian faith had, by gravity, sincerity, modesty, and holiness of life, so conquered all opposition, that none durst bespatter it, or charge it with any of those calumnies which the ancient enemies of our religion used to fasten upon it. What religion (says Arnobius[y]) can be truer, more useful, powerful, just, than this? which (as he elsewhere notes) renders men meek, speakers of truth, modest, chaste, charitable, kind, and helpful to all, as

[s] Octav. c. 35. [t] Ibid. c. 38. [u] De justit. l. v. c. 9.
[x] Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 7. Vid. Constant. Orat. ad cœtum. S. S. c. 23.
[y] Adv. gent. l. iv. p. 67.

if most nearly related to us. And indeed this is the genuine and natural tendency of the Christian doctrine, and which it cannot but effect wherever it is kindly embraced and entertained. So true is that which Athenagoras[z] told the emperors, that no Christian could be a bad man, unless he were an hypocrite. And Tertullian[a] openly declares, that when men depart from the discipline of the gospel, they so far cease amongst us to be accounted Christians. And, therefore, when the heathens objected,[b] that some that went under that name were guilty of great enormities, and inquired how comes such a one to be a cheat, if the Christians be so righteous; how so cruel, if they be merciful? he answers, that by this very thing they bore witness, that they who were real Christians were not such; that there is a vast difference between the crime and the name, the opinion and the truth; that they are not presently Christians that are called so, but cheat others by the pretence of a name; that they shunned the company of such, and did not meet or partake with them in the offices of religion; that they did not admit those whom mere force and cruelty had driven to deny Christianity, much less such as voluntarily transgressed the Christian discipline: and that, therefore, the heathens did very ill to call them Christians, whom the Christians themselves did disown, who yet were not wont to deny their own party.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE POSITIVE PARTS OF THEIR RELIGION: AND FIRST OF THEIR PIETY TOWARDS GOD.

The religion of the ancient Christians considered, with respect to God, themselves, and other men. Their piety seen in two things—their detestation of idolatry, and great care about the matters of divine worship. What notion they had of idolatry; their abhorrency of it. Their refusing to give divine honour to angels and created spirits: this condemned by the Laodicean council. Their denying any thing of divine honour to martyrs and departed saints. The famous instance of the church of Smyrna, concerning St. Polycarp. St. Augustine's testimonies to this purpose. Their mighty abhorrence of the heathen idolatry. The very making an idol accounted unlawful. Hatred of idolatry one of the first principles instilled into new converts. Their affectionate bewailing any that lapsed into this sin. Several severe penalties imposed

[z] Leg. pro Christ. s. 2. [a] Apol. c. 46. [b] Ad Nation. l. i. c. 5.

by the ancient council of Illiberis upon persons guilty of idolatry. They were willing to hazard any thing rather than sacrifice to the gods. Constantius's plot to try the integrity of his courtiers. A double instance of the Christian soldiers in Julian's army: their active zeal in breaking the images of the heathen gods, and assaulting persons while doing sacrifice to them; this whether justifiable. Notwithstanding all this, the Christians accused by the heathens of idolatry; of worshipping the sun: whence that charge arose. Of adoring a cross. Of worshipping an ass's head. Christians called *Asinarii*. The absurd and monstrous picture of Christ mentioned by Tertullian. The occasion of this ridiculous fiction, whence.

Having thus seen with how much clearness the ancient Christians vindicated themselves from those unjust aspersions, which their spiteful and malicious adversaries had cast upon them; we come now to take a more direct and positive view of their religion, which, according to St. Paul's division,[c] we shall consider as to their piety towards God; those virtues which more immediately concerned themselves; and those which respected their behaviour and carriage towards others. Their piety towards God appeared in those two main instances of it, a serious and hearty detestation of idolatry, and a religious care about the concerns of divine worship.

Idolatry in those times was the prevailing sin of the world, "the principal crime of mankind, the great guilt of the age, and the almost sole cause of men's being brought into judgment;" as what in a manner contains all sins under it, as Tertullian begins his book upon that subject;[d] a crime of the first rank, and one of the highest sorts of wickedness, as it is called by the most ancient council in Spain."[e] They looked upon it as a sin that undermined the very being of the Deity, and ravished the honour of his crown. Before we proceed any further, we shall first inquire, what was the notion they generally had of idolatry; and they then accounted that a man was guilty of idolatry, when he gave divine adoration to any thing that was not God; not only when he worshipped a material idol, but when he vested any creature with that religious respect and veneration that was only due to God. "Idolatry (says Tertullian[f]) robs God, denying him those honours that are due to him, and conferring them upon others; so that at the same time it does both defraud him and reproach him:" and a little after he expressly affirms,[g] that whatever is exalted above the standard of civil worship, in imitation

[c] Tit. ii. 12.
[d] De Idololat. c. 1.
[e] Conc. Illiberit. Can. 1.
[f] De Idololat. c. 11.
[g] Ibid. c. 15.

of the divine excellency, is directly made an idol: thus St. Gregory, for his solid and excellent learning called "the Divine,"[h] (a title never given to any besides him, but to St. John the Apostle,) designs idolatry (which, says he, is the greatest evil in the world) to be "the translation of that worship that is due to the Creator upon the creature." Accordingly, we find them infinitely zealous to assert divine adoration as the proper and incommunicable prerogative of God alone, and absolutely refusing to impart religious worship to any, though the best of creatures; surely, if any one would think, angels, the first rank of created beings, creatures of such sublime excellencies and perfections, might have challenged it at their hands; but hear what Origen says to this: "we adore (says he[i]) our Lord God, and serve him alone; following the example of Christ, who, when tempted by the devil to fall down and worship him, answered, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;' which is the reason why we refuse to give honours to those spirits that preside over human affairs, because we cannot serve two masters, to wit, God and mammon. As for these demons, we know that they have no administration of the conveniences of man's life: yea, though we know that they are not demons, but angels, that have the government of fruits and seasons, and the productions of animals committed to them; we indeed speak well of them, and think them happy that they are intrusted by God to manage the conveniencies of man's life; but yet do not give them that honour that is only due to God; for this neither does God allow of, neither do they desire it; but equally love and regard us when we do not, as if we did sacrifice to them." And when Celsus a little before had smartly pressed him to do honour to demons, he rejects the motion with great contempt: "away (says he[k]) with this counsel of Celsus, who in this is not in the least to be hearkened to; for the great God only is to be adored, and prayers to be delivered up to none but his only begotten Son, 'the first-born of every creature,' that as our High-priest he may carry them to 'his Father and to our Father, to his God and to our God.'" It is true that the worship of angels did (and that very early, as appears from the apostle's caveat against it in his epistle to the Colossians) creep into some

[h] Greg. Naz. Orat. Paneg. in Nativ. Christ. Orat. xxxviii. p. 620.

[i] Contr. Cels. l. viii. s. 56.

[k] Ibid. s. 26.

parts of the Christian church, but was always disowned and cried out against, and at last publicly and solemnly condemned by the whole Laodicean council: "It is not lawful (says the thirty-fifth canon of that council) for Christians to leave the church of God, and to go and invocate angels, and to make prohibited assemblies: if, therefore, any one shall be found devoting himself to this private idolatry, let him be accursed; forasmuch as he has forsaken the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and has delivered up himself to idolatry." From which nothing can be more clear, than that it was the sense of these fathers, that the worshipping of angels was not only downright idolatry, but a plain apostacy from the Christian faith.

Nor were they more peremptory in denying divine honour to angels, than they were to martyrs and departed saints: for though they had a mighty honour and respect for martyrs, (as we shall take notice afterwards,) as those that had maintained the truth of their religion and sealed it with their blood, and therefore did what they could to do praise and honour to their memories, yet were they far from placing any thing of religion or divine adoration in it; whereof it will be enough to quote one famous instance. The church of Smyrna,[1] writing to the churches of Pontus, to give them an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp their bishop, tells them, that after he was dead, many of the Christians were desirous to have gotten the remains of his body, to have given them decent and honourable burial, but were prevented in it by some Jews, who importuned the proconsul to the contrary, suggesting that the Christians, leaving their crucified Master, might henceforth worship Polycarp; whereupon they add, that this suggestion must needs proceed from ignorance of the true state of Christians: "this they did, (say they,) not considering how impossible it is that ever we should either forsake Christ, who died for the salvation of mankind, or that we should worship any other. We adore him as the Son of God; but the martyrs, as the disciples and followers of our Lord, we deservedly love for their eminent kindness to their own Prince and Master; whose companions and fellow-disciples we also by all means desire to be." This instance is so much the more valuable in this case, not only because so plain and pertinent, but because so ancient, and from persons of so

[1] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 15.

great authority in the church: for this is not the testimony of any one private person, but of the whole church of Smyrna, according as it had been trained up under the doctrine and discipline of Polycarp, the immediate disciple of St. John. This was the doctrine and practice of Christians then, and it held so for some ages after, even down to the times of St. Augustine, when yet in many other things the simplicity of the Christian religion began to decline apace: "we set apart (says he[m]) no temples, nor priests, nor divine services nor sacrifices to martyrs, because they are not God; but the same who is theirs, is our God: indeed we honour their memories, as of holy men who have stood for the truth even unto death, that so the true religion might appear, and those which are false be convinced to be so. But who ever heard a priest standing at the altar, built for the honour and worship of God, over the body of the holy martyr, to say in his prayers, 'I offer sacrifice to thee, Peter, or Paul, or Cyprian?' for in such commemorations we offer to that God, who made them both men and martyrs, and has made them partners with holy angels in the heavenly glory; and by these solemnities we both give thanks to the true God for the victories which they have gained, and also stir up ourselves, by begging his assistance, to contend for such crowns and rewards as they are possessed of; so that whatever offices religious men perform in the places of the martyrs, they are only ornaments to their memories, not sacrifices or divine services done to the departed, as if they were deities." More to the same purpose we may find in that place, as also in infinite other places of his works, where (were it worth the while) I could easily shew that he does no less frequently than expressly assert, that though the honour of love, respect, and imitation, yet no religious adoration is due either to angels, martyrs, or departed saints.

But the great instance wherein the primitive Christians manifested their detestation of idolatry was, in respect of the idolatrous worship of the heathen world, the denying and abhorring any thing of divine honour that was done to their gods. They looked upon the very making of idols (though with no intention to worship them) as an unlawful trade, and inconsistent with Christianity: "How have we renounced the devil and all his angels, (says Tertullian,[n] meaning their solemn renunciation in

[m] August. de Civ. Dei. l. viii. c. 27. Vid. l. xxii. c. 10.

[n] De Idololat. c. 6.

baptism,) if we make idols? nor is it enough to say, though I make them, I do not worship them; there being the same cause not to make them that there is not to worship them, viz. the offence that in both is done to God; yet thou dost so far worship them, as thou makest them that others may worship them:" and therefore he roundly pronounces,[o] that no art, no profession, no service whatsoever that is employed either in making or ministering to idols, can come short of idolatry. They startled at any thing that had but the least shadow of symbolizing with them in their idolatry: therefore the Ancyran council[p] condemned them to a two years' suspension from the sacrament who sat down with their heathen friends upon their solemn festivals in their idol-temples, although they brought their own provisions along with them, and touched not one bit of what had been offered to the idol. Their first care in instructing new converts, was to leaven them with the hatred of idolatry: "Those that are to be initiated into our religion, (says Origen,[q]) we do, before all things, instil into them a great dislike and contempt of all idols and images, and lift up their minds from worshipping creatures instead of God, to him who is the great Creator of the world." If any, through weakness, chanced at any time to lapse into this sin, how pathetically did they bewail it! So Celerinus, in his epistle to Lucian,[r] giving him an account of a woman, that to avoid persecution had done sacrifice, and thereby fallen from Christ, he bewails her as dead, tells him that it stuck so close to him, that though in the time of Easter, a time of festivity and rejoicing, yet he wept night and day, and kept company with sackcloth and ashes, and resolved to do so, till by the help of Christ and the prayers of good men she should, by repentance, be raised up again. The better to prevent this sin, (wherein weaker Christians were sometimes ensnared in those times of cruelty and persecution,) the discipline of the ancient church was very severe against it; of which we can have no better evidence than to take a little view of the determinations relating to this case of that ancient council of Illiberis,[s] held some years before the time of Constantine; there we find, that if any Christian after baptism took upon him the flamenship, or

[o] De Idololat. c. 11. Vid. c. 9, 10.
[p] Can. 7.
[q] Adv. Cels. l. iii. s. 15.
[r] Inter Epist. Cypr. ep. xxi. p. 44, 45.
[s] Concil. Illiber. Can. 2. vid. not. Albaspin. p. 5. et de rit. Eccles. Obs. 22.

priesthood of the Gentiles, (an office ordinarily devolved upon the better sort, and which Christians sometimes either made suit for, to gain more favour with the people, or had it forced upon them by the laws of the country, so that they must either undergo it, or fly, and forfeit their estates,) such a one, no not at the hour of death, was to be received into the communion of the church. The reason of which severity was, because whoever underwent that office must do sacrifice to the gods, and entertain the people with several kind of sights, plays, and sports, which could not be managed without murders, and the exercise of all lust and filthiness, whereby they did double and treble their sin, as that council speaks.[t] If a Christian in that office did but allow the charges to maintain those sports and sights, (although he did not actually sacrifice, which he might avoid, by substituting a Gentile priest in his room,) he was indeed to be taken into communion at last, but was to undergo a very severe penance for it all his life. Nay, although he did neither of the former, yet if he did but wear a crown,[u] (a thing usually done by the heathen priests,) he was to be excluded from communion for two years together. If a Christian went up to the capitol,[x] (probably out of curiosity,) only to see the sacrifices of the Gentiles, and did not see them, yet he should be as guilty as if he had seen them, his intention and will being the same, as the learned Albaspine (and I think truly) understands the canon:[y] and in such a case, if the person was one of the faithful, he was not to be received till after ten years' repentance. Every master of a family was commanded to suffer no little idols or images to be kept in his house, to be worshipped by his children or servants; but if this could not be done without danger of being betrayed and accused by his servants, (a thing not unusual in those times,) that then, at least, he himself should abstain from them; otherwise to be thrown out of the church. Being imbued with such principles, and trained up under such a discipline as this, it is no wonder if they would do or suffer any thing rather than comply with the least symptom of idolatry. They willingly underwent banishment and confiscation; amongst several of which sort, Caldonius tells Cyprian of one Bona,[z] who, being violently drawn by her husband to sacrifice, they by force guided her hand to do it, cried

[t] Vid. Can. 3.
[u] Can. 55.
[x] Can. 59.
[y] Can. 41.
[z] Inter. Epist. Cypr. c. xxiv. p. 49.

out and protested against it, that it was not she but they that did it, and was thereupon sent into banishment. They freely laid down their greatest honours and dignities, rather than by any idolatrous act to offer violence to their consciences; whereof Constantius, the father of Constantine, made this wise experiment:[a] he gave out that all the officers and great men of the court should either do sacrifice to the gods, or immediately quit his service, and the offices and preferments which they held under him; whereupon many turned about, while others remained firm and unshaken: upon this, the prudent and excellent prince discovered his plot, embraced, commended, and advanced to greater honours those who were faithful to their religion and their conscience; reproaching and turning off those who were so ready to acquit and forfeit them. Thus Jovianus,[b] a man of considerable note and quality, and an officer of great place in Julian's army, when the emperor sent out his edict that all the soldiers should either sacrifice or lay down their arms, presently threw away his belt, rather than he would obey that impious command; though the emperor, at that time, for reasons of state, would not suffer him to depart. And after the death of Julian, when by the unanimous vote of the whole army he was chosen emperor, he utterly refused it, till the army had renounced their pagan idolatry and superstition. And though, it is true, that life is dearest to men of all things in this world, yet how cheerfully did they choose rather to shed their blood than to defile their consciences with idolatry; of which Eusebius gives us many instances; and, indeed, this was the common test in those times, either sacrifice or die. Phileas, bishop of Thmuis,[c] in a letter to his people, giving them an account of the martyrdoms that happened at Alexandria, tells them, that many, after having endured strange and unheard-of torments, were put to their choice, whether they would sacrifice, and be set at liberty, or refuse, and lose their heads; whereupon all of them, without any hesitation, readily went to embrace death; knowing well how the scripture is, "that whoever sacrifices unto strange gods shall be cut off;" and again, "thou shalt have no other gods but me." And in the next chapter, Eusebius tells us of a whole city of Christians in Phrygia, which, together with all the men, women,

[a] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. i. c. 19.
[b] Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 22.
[c] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. viii. c. 10.

and children, was burnt to ashes, for no other reason, but because they universally confessed themselves to be Christians, and refused to obey those that commanded them to worship idols: instances of which kind there are enough to be met with in the histories of the church.

And so fixed and unmoveable were they in this, that no promises or hopes of reward, no fear or threatening, could either tempt or startle them; a memorable passage or two that we meet withal to this purpose: it was a custom amongst the Romans to shew some respect and honour not only to the emperors themselves, but even to their statues and images, by bowing the body, or some other act of external veneration. Now Julian the emperor[d] (whose great design was to reduce all men, but especially his army, back to paganism and idolatry) made use of this crafty project; he placed the pictures of Jupiter, and other heathen gods, so close to his own statues, that they could not bow to the one but they must also to the other; politically reducing them to this strait, that either they must refuse to pay civil honour to their prince, (which had been a sufficient crime against them,) or seem at least to do honour unto the gods; with this device the less wary and cautelous were entrapped;[e] but others, that were more pious and prudent, chose rather to deny the prince that civil homage, and fall into the hands of martyrdom, than, by such an ambiguous adoration, seem to patronise idolatry. At another time he fell upon this stratagem: upon a solemn day, when the emperors were wont to bestow largesses upon the soldiers, he caused the army to be called before him, setting then in great pomp and splendour, and a large donative of gold to be laid on the one side, and an heap of frankincense, with fire by it, on the other; proclamation being made, that they that would sacrifice the one, should have the other. By this means many of the Christian soldiers were ensnared, performed the sacrifice, received the donative, and went home jolly and secure. But being at dinner with their companions, and drinking to each other, (as the custom was,) with their eyes lift up, and calling upon Christ, and making the "sign of the cross," as oft as they took the cup into their hands, one at the table told them, he

[d] Greg. Naz. Orat. invect. i. in Julian. Orat. xiii. p. 90. Vid. Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 17.

[e] Greg. Naz. ibid. p. 84.

wondered how they could call upon Christ, whom they had so lately abjured. Amazed at this, and asking how they had abjured him, they were told, that they had sacrificed, which was all one as to deny Christ. Whereupon starting up from the table, they ran up and down the market-place in a furious and frantic manner, crying out, "We are Christians, we are Christians in heart and truth; and let all the world take notice that there is but one God, to whom we live, and for whom we will die. We have not broken the faith which we swore to thee, O blessed Saviour, nor renounced our profession. If our hands be guilty, our hearts are innocent. It is not the gold that has corrupted us, but the emperor's craftiness hath deceived us." And with that running to the emperor, they threw down their gold before him, with this address: "We have not, sir, received a donative, but are condemned to die. Instead of being honoured, we are vilified and disgraced: take this largess, and give it to your soldiers; as for us, kill us, and sacrifice us to Christ, whom alone we own as our highest Prince. Return us fire for fire, and for the ashes of the sacrifice reduce us to ashes. Cut off those hands, which we so wickedly stretched out; those feet that carried us to so great a mischief. Give others the gold, who may have no cause to repent of it; for our part, Christ is enough for us, whom we value instead of all things." With this noble and generous resolution, though the emperor was highly enraged, yet because he envied them the honour of martyrdom, he would not put them to death, but banished them, and inflicted other penalties which might sufficiently evidence his rage against them.

Nay, with so warm a zeal were they acted against idolatry, that many of them could not contain themselves from falling foul upon it, wherever they met it, though with the immediate hazard of their lives. So Romanus,[f] (deacon and exorcist of the church of Cæsarea,) seeing great multitudes of people at Antioch flocking to the temples, and doing sacrifice to the gods, came to them, and began very severely to reprove and reproach them; for which being apprehended, after many strange and cruel usages he was put to death with all imaginable pain and torture. Thus Apphianus, (a young man,) when the criers by proclamation summoned all the inhabitants of Cæsarea to sacrifice to the

[f] Euseb. de mart. Palest. c. 2.

gods, the tribunes particularly reciting every man's name out of a book, to the great terror of all that were Christians, privately and unknown to us, (says Eusebius,[g] who lived at that time in the same house with him,) stole out, and getting near Urbanus the president, (who was then compassed about with a guard of soldiers,) just as he was about to offer sacrifice, caught hold of his right hand, which he grasped so fast, that he forced him to let fall the sacrifice, gravely admonishing him to desist from such errors and vanities: "clearly shewing, (says the historian,) that true Christians are so far from being drawn from the worship of the true God, that by threatenings and torments they are rather heightened into a greater and more ingenuous freedom and boldness in the profession of the truth." For this fact, the young man was almost torn in pieces by the soldiers, whose rage and fierceness could scarce suffer him to be reprieved for acuter tortures, which were exercised towards him with all possible cruelty; and when all could do no good upon him, he was thrown half dead into the sea. The like we read of three famous Christians at Merum, a city in Phrygia,[h] where, when the governor of the province, under Julian the Apostate, had commanded the heathen temple to be opened, they got by night into the temple, and broke to pieces all the statues and images of the gods. Whereupon, when a general persecution was like to arise against all the Christians of the city, that the ignorant and innocent might not suffer, the authors of the fact came of their own accord to the judge, and confessed it; who offered them pardon if they would sacrifice, which they rejected with disdain, and told him, they were much readier to endure any torments, and death itself, than to be defiled with sacrificing. And accordingly were first treated with all sorts of torments, and then burnt upon an iron grate, retaining their courage to the last, and took their leave of the governor with this sarcasm: "If thou hast a mind, Amachius, to eat roast meat, turn us on the other side, lest we be but half roasted, and so prove ungrateful to thy taste." So mightily did a restless passion for the divine honour possess the minds of those primitive Christians. And though it is true, such transports of zeal are not ordinarily warrantable, (for which reason the council of Illiberis[i] justly prohibited those who were killed in the defacing and demolishing

[g] Euseb. de mart. Palest. c. 4. [h] Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 15. [i] Can. 60.

idols, to be reckoned in the number of martyrs,) yet do they sufficiently shew what a spirit of eagerness and activity ruled in those times against the false religions of the world.

By all this we may see how unjustly the Christians were traduced and accused for idolaters. Three things were commonly charged upon them: that they worshipped the sun, the cross, and an ass's head. For the first, their worshipping the sun, Tertullian answers,[k] that the mistake arose from a double cause, partly that the Christians of those times did generally pray toward the east and the sun rising, which the heathens themselves also did, though upon different grounds; and partly because they performed the solemnities of their religion upon the day that was dedicated to the sun, which made the Gentiles suspect that they worshipped the sun itself. They were next charged with worshipping crosses; a charge directly false. As for crosses, (says Octavius,[l]) we neither desire nor worship them; it is you who consecrate wooden gods, that perhaps adore wooden crosses as parts of them: for what else are your ensigns, banners, and colours, with which you go out to war, but golden and painted crosses? The very trophies of your victory do not only resemble the fashion of a simple cross, but of a man that is fastened to it. The very same answer which Tertullian[m] also returns to this charge. The occasion of it, no doubt, was the Christians' talking of and magnifying so much their crucified Master, and their almost constant use of the sign of the cross, which (as we shall see afterwards) they made use of even in the most common actions of their lives: but for paying any adoration to a material cross, was a thing to which those times were the greatest strangers. Otherwise, understanding the cross for him that hung upon it, they were not ashamed (with the great apostle) "to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," and to count it the matter of their highest joy and triumph; but the absurdest part of the charge was, that they worshipped the head of an ass. I hear, (says the heathen in Minutius Felix,[n]) that being seduced by I know not what fond persuasion, they worship the consecrated head of an ass, one of the filthiest creatures: a religion fitly calculated for persons of such a dull and stupid disposition. Hence Tertullian tells us,[o] that Christians were

[k] Apol. c. 16. [l] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 29. [m] Apol. c. 16.
[n] Octav. c. 9. [o] Apol. c. 16. Vid. ad Nation. l. i. c. 14.

called *asinarii*, "ass-worshippers;" and that Christ was painted, and publicly exposed, by the bold wicked hand of an apostate Jew, with asses' ears, one of his feet hoofed, holding a book in his hand, and having a gown over him, with this inscription: DEUS CHRISTIANORUM ONONYCHITES,[p] "The ass-hoofed God of the Christians." A most ridiculous representation, and the issue of the most foolish spite and malice. "When I saw it, (says he,) I laughed both at the title and the fashion." This, Octavius tells his adversary,[q] was the result and spawn of lying fame, begot and nourished by the father of lies: for who (says he) can be so silly as to worship this? or who can be so much more silly as to believe it should be worshipped? unless it be that you yourselves do consecrate whole asses in the stable with your goddess Epona, and religiously adorn them in the solemnities of Isis, and both sacrifice and adore the heads of rams and oxen. You make gods of a mixture of a goat and a man, and dedicate them with the faces of dogs and lions. More he has there to the same purpose, as Tertullian also had answered the same thing before him. The true ground of this ridiculous charge (as Tertullian observes[r]) was a fabulous report that had been a long time common amongst the heathens, that the Jews, when wandering in the wilderness, and almost ready to die of thirst, were conducted by wild asses to a fountain of water; for which great kindness, they formed the shape of an ass, and ever after worshipped it with divine honours. This is confidently reported, both by Tacitus[s] and Plutarch,[t] as it had been many years before by Appio the Alexandrian, in his books against the Jews; and by this means the heathens, who did frequently confound the Jews and Christians, came to form and fasten this charge upon them, when it was equally false in respect of both. For, as Tertullian observes,[u] the same Tacitus, who reports this, tells us in another place, that when Pompey, at the taking of Jerusalem, presumptuously broke into the holy of holies, whither none but the high-priest might enter, out of a curiosity to pry into the most hidden secrets and arcana of their religion, he found no image at all there; whereas, (says Tertullian,) had they worshipped any such thing, there had been no likelier place

[p] De variis hujus vocis lectionibus. Vid. Rigalt. in loc. et Voss. de Idol. l. iii. c. 75.
[q] Octav. c. 28.
[r] Vid. etiam ad Nation. l. i. c. 11.
[s] Tacit. Hist. l. v. c. 4.
[t] Plut. sympos. l. iv. quæst. 5. p. 670.
[u] Apol. c. 16.

to have met with it, and therefore brands him with the charge of the most lying historian in the world. And thus we see how the ancient Christians manifested and maintained their love and piety towards God, by a most vigorous and hearty opposition of that idolatry, that reigned so uncontrollably in the heathen world.

CHAPTER VI.

OF CHURCHES AND PLACES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP IN THE PRIMITIVE TIMES.

Place, a circumstance necessary to every action. The piety of Christians in founding places for the solemnities of religion. They had distinct and separate places for their public assemblies, even in the apostles' times. This proved out of the New Testament, as also in the succeeding ages, from the testimonies of the fathers and heathen writers. The common objection of the Gentiles, that Christians had no temples, considered and answered. Churches increased as Christianity met with favourable entertainment: restored and repaired by Dioclesian, Maximinus, Constantine. The fashion of their churches, oblong: built towards the east. The form of their churches described. The *vestibulum*, or porch. The *narthex*, and what in it. The nave, or body of the church. The *ambo*, or reading pew, the station of the faithful. The ἱερατεῖον, or chancel. The *altarium*, or Lord's table. The bishop's throne, and seats of the presbyters. The *diaconicon*, what. The *prothesis*. Christians then beautified their churches. Whether they had altars in them. Decent tables for the celebration of the divine offices. Those frequently by the fathers styled altars, and in what sense. They had no such gaudy altars as the heathens had in their temples, and the papists now in the churches. Altars, when begun to be fixed and made of stone. Made asylums and places of refuge, and invested with many privileges by Christian emperors. No images in their churches for above four hundred years, proved out of the fathers. Pictures in churches condemned by the council of Illiberis. An account of Epiphanius's tearing the picture of Christ in the church of Anablatha; and the great force of the argument thence against image worship. Christian churches, when first formally consecrated. The *encænia* of the ancient church. Our wakes or feasts in memory of the dedication of particular churches. What incomes or revenues they had in the first ages. Particular churches had some standing revenues even under the heathen emperors. These much increased by the piety of Constantine and the first Christian princes; their laws noted to that purpose. Their reverence shewed at their going into churches, and during their stay there, even by the emperors themselves.

The primitive Christians were not more heartily zealous against the idolatrous worship of the heathen gods, than they were religiously observant of whatever concerned the honour and worship of the true, as to all the material parts and circum-

stances of it; as will easily appear, if we consider what care they had about the place, time, persons, and both the matter and the manner of that worship that they performed to God. Under each of which we shall take notice of what is most considerable, and does most properly relate to it, so far as the records of those times give us an account of it.

Place is an inseparable circumstance of religious worship; for every body, by the natural necessity of its being, requires some determinate place either for rest or motion. Now the worship of God being in a great part an external action, especially when performed by the joint concurrence of several persons, does not only necessarily require a place, but a place conveniently capacious of all that join together in the same public actions of religion: this reason put all nations, even by the light of nature, upon erecting public places for the honour of their gods, and for their own conveniency in meeting together to pay their religious services and devotions. But my present inquiry reaches no further than the primitive Christians; not whether they met together for the discharge of their common duties, (which I suppose none can doubt of,) but whether they had churches, fixed and appropriate places, for the joint performance of their public offices: and that they had, even in those early times, will, I think, be beyond all dispute, if we take but a short survey of those first ages of Christianity. In the sacred story, we find some more than probable footsteps of some determinate places for their solemn conventions, and peculiar only to that use. Of this nature was that *ὑπερῷον*, or "upper room,"[w] into which the apostles and disciples (after the return from the ascension of our Saviour) went up, as into a place commonly known and separate to that use, there by fasting and prayer to make choice of a new apostle; and this supposed by a very ancient tradition to have been the same room wherein our Saviour, the night before his death, celebrated the passover with his disciples, and instituted the Lord's supper. Such a one, if not (which I rather think) the same, was that one place,[x] wherein they were all assembled with one accord upon the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost visibly came down upon them: and this the rather, because the multitude (and they too strangers of every nation under heaven) came so readily to the place upon the first rumour

[w] Acts i. 13.

[x] Acts ii. 1.

of so strange an accident, which could hardly have been, had it not been commonly known to be the place where the Christians used to meet together. And this very learned men take to be the meaning of that, Acts ii. 46: "they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread, κατ' οἶκον, (not as we render it, from house to house, but) at home," as it is in the margin; or, "in the house they eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart:" i. e. when they had performed their daily devotions at the temple, at the accustomed hours of prayer they used to return home to this upper room, there to celebrate the holy eucharist, and then go to their ordinary meals. This seems to be a clear and unforced interpretation, and to me the more probable, because it immediately follows upon their assembling together in that one place at the day of Pentecost; which room is also called by the same name of "house," at the second verse of that chapter. And it is no ways unlikely, (as Mr. Mede conjectures,) but that when the first believers "sold their houses and lands, and laid the money at the apostles' feet," to supply the necessities of the church, some of them might give their houses (at least some eminent room in them) for the church to meet and perform their sacred duties: which also may be the reason why the apostle, writing to the particular Christians, speaks so often of "the church that was in their house:" which seems clearly to intimate, not so much the particular persons of any private family, living together under the same band of Christian discipline, as that in such or such a house, (and more especially in this or that room of it,) there was the constant and solemn convention of the Christians of that place, for their joint celebration of divine worship. And this will be further cleared by that famous passage of St. Paul, where taxing the Corinthians for their irreverence and abuse of the Lord's supper, one greedily eating before another, and some of them to great excess; "What, (says he,[y]) have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God?" Where that by church is not meant the assembly meeting, but the place in which they used to assemble, is evident, partly from what went before; for "their coming together in the church," verse 18, is expounded by "their coming together into one place," verse 20: plainly arguing that the apostle meant not the persons but the

[y] 1 Cor. xi. 22.

place; partly from the opposition which he makes between the church and their own private houses. If they must have such irregular banquets, they had houses of their own, where it was much fitter to do it, and to have their ordinary repast, than in that place which was set apart for the common exercises of religion, and therefore ought not to be dishonoured by such extravagant and intemperate feastings; for which cause he enjoins them, in the close of that chapter, "that if any man hunger, he should eat at home." And that this place was always thus understood by the fathers of old, were no hard matter to make out; as also by most learned men of later times, of which it shall suffice to intimate two of our own, men of great name and learning, who have done it to great satisfaction.[z]

Thus stood the case during the apostles' times: for the ages after them we find that the Christians had their fixed and definite places of worship, especially in the second century: as, had we no other evidence, might be made good from the testimony of the author of that dialogue in Lucian,[a] (if not Lucian himself, of which I see no great cause to doubt,) who lived under the reign of Trajan, and who expressly mentions that house or room wherein the Christians were wont to assemble together. And Clemens[b] (in his famous epistle to the Corinthians) assures us, that Christ did not only appoint the times when, the persons by whom, but the places where he would be solemnly served and worshipped. And Justin Martyr expressly affirms,[c] that upon Sunday, all Christians (whether in town or country) used to assemble together in one place; which could hardly be done, had not that place been fixed and settled. The same we find afterwards in several places of Tertullian,[d] who speaks of their coming into the church and the house of God, which he elsewhere calls the "house of our dove;" i. e. our innocent and dove-like religion; and there describes the very form and fashion of it. And in another place, speaking of their going into the water to be baptized, he tells us,[e] they were wont first to go into the church to make their solemn renunciation before the bishop. About this time, in the reign of Alexander Severus the emperor, (who began his reign about the year 222,) the heathen historian tells

[z] Nic. Full. Misc. Sacr. l. ii. c. 9. Mede, p. 405.
[b] Sect. 40.
[d] De Idolol. c. 7. p. 88. Adv. Valentin. c. 3.
[a] Philopatr. vol. ii. p. 1007.
[c] Apol. i. s. 67.
[e] De Corona Mil. c. 3.

us,[f] that when there was a contest between the Christians and the vintners about a certain public place, which the Christians had seized and challenged for theirs, the emperor gave the cause for the Christians against the vintners; saying, "it was much better that God should be worshipped there any ways, than that the vintners should possess it." If it shall be said, that the heathens of those times generally accused the Christians for having no temples, and charged it upon them as a piece of atheism and impiety; and that the Christian apologists did not deny it, as will appear to any that will take the pains to examine the places alleged in the margin.[g] To this the answer, in short, depends upon the notion which they had of a temple, by which the Gentiles understood the places devoted to their gods, and wherein their deities were inclosed and shut up; places adorned with statues and images, with fine altars and ornaments. And for such temples as these, they freely confessed they had none, no, nor ought to have; for that the true God did not (as the heathens supposed theirs) "dwell in temples made with hands," nor either needed nor could possibly be honoured by them: and therefore they purposely abstained from the word "temple," and I do not remember that it is used by any Christian writer for the place of the Christian assemblies, for the best part of the first three hundred years. And yet those very writers who deny Christians to have had any temples, do at the same time acknowledge that they had their meeting places for divine worship, their *conventicula*, as Arnobius calls them,[h] and complains they were furiously demolished by their enemies. If any desire to know more concerning this, as also that Christians had appropriate places of worship for the greatest part of the three first centuries, let him read a discourse purposely written upon this subject by a most learned man of our own nation:[i] nor indeed should I have said so much as I have about it, but that I had noted most of these things before I read his discourse upon that subject.

Afterwards their churches began to rise apace, according as they met with more quiet and favourable times; especially

[f] Lamprid. in vit. Alex. Sever. c. 49.

[g] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 8. et 32. Arnob. adv. gent. l. vi. p. 83. Lact. de Orig. error. l. ii. c. 2.

[h] Lib. iv. p. 67. [i] Jos. Mede's Discourse concerning Churches, oper. par. i. l. ii.

under Valerian, Gallienus, Claudius, Aurelian, and some other emperors: of which times Eusebius tells us,[k] that the bishops met with the highest respect and kindness, both from people and governors; and adds, "but who shall be able to reckon up the innumerable multitudes that daily flocked to the faith of Christ, the number of congregations in every city, those famous meetings of theirs in their oratories, or sacred places, so great, that not being content with those old buildings which they had before, they erected from the very foundations more fair and spacious churches in every city?" This was several years before the times of Constantine, and yet even they had their churches of ancient date. This indeed was a very serene and sunshiny season; but, alas, it begun to darken again, and the clouds returned after rain; for in the very next chapter he tells us, that in the reign of Dioclesian there came out imperial edicts, commanding all Christians to be persecuted, the bishops to be imprisoned, the holy Bible to be burnt, and their churches to be demolished and laid level with the ground; which how many they were may be guessed at by this, that (as Optatus tells us,[l] there were about this time above forty *basilicæ* or churches in Rome only. Upon Constantine's coming into a partnership of the empire, the clouds began to disperse and scatter; and Maximinus,[m] (who then governed the eastern parts of the empire,) a bitter enemy to Christians, was yet forced by a public edict to give Christians the free liberty of their religion, and leave to repair and rebuild, *τὰ κυριακὰ τὰ οἰκεῖα*, their churches;[n] which shortly after, they every where set upon, raising their churches from the ground to a vast height, and to a far greater splendour and glory than those which they had before, the emperors giving all possible encouragement to it by frequent laws and constitutions; the Christians also themselves contributing towards it with the greatest cheerfulness and liberality, even to a magnificence comparable to that of the Jewish princes towards the building of Solomon's temple, as Eusebius tells them,[o] in his oration at the dedication of the famous church at Tyre. And no sooner was the whole empire devolved upon Constantine,[p] but he published two laws, one to prohibit pagan worship, the other commanding churches to be built of a nobler size and

[k] Hist. Eccl. l. viii. c. 1. [l] De schism. Donat. l. ii. p. 40. [m] Euseb. l. ix. c. 10.
[n] Id. l. x. c. 2. [o] Ibid. c. 4. [p] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. ii. c. 45, 46.

capacity than before; to which purpose he directed his letters to Eusebius and the rest of the bishops, to see it done within their several jurisdictions, charging also the governors of the provinces to be assisting to them, and to furnish them with whatever was necessary and convenient.[q] Insomuch, that in a short time the world was beautified with churches and sacred oratories, both in cities and villages, and in the most barbarous and desert places, called *κυριακὰ*, says the historian, (from whence our kirk and church,) the Lord's houses, because erected not to men, but to the honour of our Lord and Saviour. It were needless to insist any longer upon the piety of Christians in building churches in and after the time of Constantine, the instances being so vastly numerous; only I cannot omit what Nazianzen[r] reports of his own father, who (though bishop of a very small and inconsiderable diocese, yet) built a famous church almost wholly at his own charge.

Thus we have seen that, from the very infancy of the gospel, the Christians always had their settled and determinate place of divine worship; for the form and fashion of their churches, it was for the most part oblong, to keep (say some[s]) the better correspondence with the fashion of a ship, the common notion and metaphor by which the church was wont to be represented, and to put us in mind that we are tossed up and down in the world, as upon a stormy and tempestuous sea, and that out of the church there is no safe passage to heaven, the country we all hope to arrive at. They were generally built towards the east, (towards which also they performed the more solemn parts of their worship, the reasons whereof we shall see afterwards in its due place,) following herein the custom of the Gentiles, though upon far other grounds than they did; and this seems to have obtained from the first ages of Christianity; sure I am, it was so in Tertullian's time, who, opposing the plain and simple way of the orthodox assemblies to the skulking and clancular conventicles of the heretics, who, serpent-like, crept about in holes and corners, says,[t] "the house of our dove-like religion is simple, built on high and in open view, and respects the light as the figure of the Holy Spirit, and the east as the representation of Christ." It cannot be thought that in the first ages, while

[q] Orat. de laud. Const. c. 7.
[r] Orat. funebr. in laud. Patr. Orat. xix. p. 313.
[s] Constit. Apost. l. ii. c. 57.
[t] Adv. Valentin. c. 3.

the flames of persecution raged about their ears, the Christian churches should be very stately and magnificent, but such as the condition of those times would bear, their splendour increasing according to the entertainment that Christianity met withal in the world, till the empire becoming Christian, their temples rose up into grandeur and gallantry, as amongst others may appear by the particular description which Eusebius makes of the church of Tyre,[u] mentioned before, and that which Constantine built at Constantinople in honour of the apostles, both which were incomparably sumptuous and magnificent.

I shall not undertake to describe at large the exact form, and the several parts and dimensions of their churches, (which varied somewhat according to different times and ages,) but briefly reflect upon such as were most common and remarkable. At the entrance of their churches (especially after they began to arrive at more perfection) was the *vestibulum*, (called also *atrium* and *προνάον*,) the "porch," in greater churches of somewhat larger capacity, adorned many times with goodly cloisters, marble columns, fountains and cisterns of water, and covered over, for the conveniency of those that stood or walked there. Here stood the lowest order of penitents, begging the prayers of the faithful as they went in. For the church itself, it usually consisted of three parts: the first was the *narthex*, (which we have no proper word to render by,) it was that part of the church that lay next to the great door by which they entered in: in the first part of it stood the catechumens, or first learners of Christianity; in the middle the *energumeni*, or those who were possessed by Satan; and in this part also, stood the font, or place of baptismal initiation; and towards the upper end was the place of the hearers, who were one of the ranks of penitents. The second part contained the middle or main body of the church, (called by the Greeks *νάος*, by the Latins *navis*, from whence our term the "nave" of the church comes,) where the faithful assembled for the celebration of divine service,[x] where the men and the women had their distinct apartments, lest at such times unchaste and irregular appetites should be kindled by a promiscuous interfering with one another; of which pious and excellent contrivance mention is made in an ancient funeral inscription found in the Vatican cemetery at Rome; such a

[u] De vit. Const. l. iv. c. 58, 59.

[x] Const. Apost. l. ii. c. 57.

one buried *sinistra parte virorum*,[y] on that side of the church where the men sat. In this part of the church, next to the entering into it, stood the class of the penitents who were called ὑποπίπτοντες, because at their going out they fell down upon their knees before the bishop, who laid his hands upon them: next to them was the *ambo*, the "pulpit," or rather "reading desk," whence the scriptures were read and preached to the people: above that were the faithful, the highest rank and order of the people, and who alone communicated at the Lord's table. The third part was the βῆμα, or ἱερατεῖον, separate from the rest of the church by neat rails, called *cancelli*, whence our English word "chancel," to denote that part of the church to this day; into this part none might come but such as were in holy orders, unless it were the Greek emperors at Constantinople, who were allowed to come up to the table to make their offerings, and so back again; within this division, the most considerable thing was the θυσιαστήριον, the "altar," (as they metaphorically called it, because there they offered the commemorative sacrifice of Christ's body and blood,) or the "communion table," (ἡ ἁγία τράπεζα, as it is frequently styled by the Greek fathers,) behind which, at the very upper end of the chancel, was the chair or throne of the bishop, (for so was it almost constantly called,) on both sides whereof were the σύνθρονοι, the "seats of the presbyters," (for the deacons might not here sit down,) the bishop's throne was raised up somewhat higher from the ground, and from hence, I suppose, it was that he usually delivered his sermons to the people. Therefore Socrates[z] seems to note it as a new thing in Chrysostom, that when he preached he went to sit ἐπὶ τοῦ ἄμβωνος, "upon the pulpit," (he means that in the body of the church, for so Sozomen[a] tells us that he sat in the reading desk in the middle of the church,) that, by reason of his low voice, he might be better heard of the people. Adjoining to the chancel, on the north side probably, was the *diaconicon*, mentioned both in the Laodicean council,[b] (though I know both Zonaras and Balsamon, and after them the learned Leo Allatius,[c] will have another thing to be meant in that place,) as also in a law of Arcadius and Honorius against heretics,[d] and probably so called, either because

[y] Roma subterran. l. ii. c. 10. n. 23. [z] Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 5.
[a] Lib. viii. c. 5. [b] Can. 21. [c] De Templ. Græc. n. 14.
[d] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. v. l. 29. ubi vid. Jac. Gothofr. Com.

peculiarly committed to the deacon of the place, or (as the great commentator upon that law will have it) because set apart, τῇ ἱερῇ διακονίᾳ, to some sacred services. It was in the nature of our modern vestries, the sacristy, wherein the plate, vessels, and vestments, belonging to the church, and other things dedicated to holy uses, were laid up, and where (in after-times) relics and such-like fopperies were treasured up with great care and diligence. On the other side of the chancel was the *prothesiuus*, or place where things were prepared in order to the sacrament, where the offerings were laid, and what remained of the sacramental elements, till they were decently disposed of. And this may serve for a short view of the churches of those first times, after they began to grow up into some beauty and perfection.

But though the Christians of those times spared no convenient cost in founding and adorning public places for the worship of God, yet were they careful to keep a decent mean between a sordid slovenliness, and a too curious and over-nice superstition. In the more early times, even while the fury and fierceness of their enemies kept them low and mean, yet they beautified their oratories and places of worship; especially if we may believe the author of the dialogue in Lucian, (whom we mentioned before, and who lived within the first age,) who, bringing in one Critias, that was persuaded by the Christians to go to the place of their assembly, (which, by his description, seems to have been an ὑπερῷον, or "upper room,") tells us, that after they had gone up several stairs, they came at last into "an house or room that was overlaid with gold," where he beheld nothing but a company of persons with their bodies bowed down and pale faces. I know the design of that dialogue in part is to abuse and deride the Christians, but there is no reason to suppose he feigned those circumstances which made nothing to his purpose. As the times grew better, they added more and greater ornaments to them; concerning two whereof there has been some contest in the Christian world—altars and images. As for altars, the first Christians had no other in their churches than decent tables of wood, upon which they celebrated the holy eucharist; these, it is true, in allusion to those in the Jewish temples, the fathers generally called altars; and truly enough might do so, by reason of those sacrifices they offered upon them, viz. in commemoration of Christ's sacrifice in the blessed sacrament, the sacrifice of prayer

and thanksgiving, and the oblation of alms and charity for the poor, (usually laid upon those tables,) which the apostle expressly styles "a sacrifice." These were the only sacrifices (for no other had the Christian world for many hundreds of years) which they then offered upon their altars, which were much of the same kind with our communion tables at this day. For that they had not any such fixed and gaudy altars (as the heathens then had in their temples, and papists still have in their churches) is most evident, because the heathens at every turn did charge and reproach them for having none, and the fathers, in their answers, did freely and openly acknowledge and avow it;[e] asserting and pleading, that the only true sacred altar was a pure and a holy mind, and that the best and most acceptable sacrifice to God was a pious heart and an innocent and religious life. *Hæc nostra sacrificia, hæc Dei sacra sunt:* "these (say they) are our oblations, these the sacrifices we owe to God." This was the state of altars in the Christian churches for near upon the first three hundred years, till Constantine coming in, and with him peace and plenty, the churches began to excel in costliness and bravery every day, and then the wooden and moveable altars began to be turned into fixed altars of stone or marble, though used to no other purpose than before, and yet this too did not so universally obtain, (though severely urged by Sylvester, bishop of Rome,) but that in very many places, tables, or moveable altars of wood, continued in use a long time after, as might easily be made appear from several passages in Athanasius[f] and others, yea, even to Augustine's time, and probably much later, were it proper to my business to search after it. No sooner were altars made fixed and immoveable, but they were compassed in with rails to fence off rudeness and irreverence, and persons began to regard them with mighty observance and respect; which soon grew so high, that they became asylums and refuges to protect innocent persons and unwitting offenders from immediate violence and oppression: an instance whereof Nazianzen[g] gives us in a Christian widow, a woman of great place

[e] Vid. Clem. Alex. Stromat. l. vii. c. 4. Orig. adv. Cels. l. viii. s. 17. Min. Fel. Octav. c. 8. et 32. Arnob. adv. gent. l. vi. p. 83. Lact. l. ii. c. 2.

[f] Athan. Eucyd. ad episc. epist. c. 3. et Ep. ad monachos. Aug. quæst. E. et. N. T. quæst. 101. et alibi sæpe.

[g] Orat. xx. in laud. Basil. p. 353.

and quality, who flying from the importunities of the president, who would have forced her to marry him, had no other way but to take sanctuary at the holy table in St. Basil's church at Cæsarea. She was demanded with many fierce and terrible threatenings, but the holy man stoutly refused, although the president was his mortal enemy, and sought only a pretence to ruin him. Many such cases are to be met with in the history of the church. Nor was this a privilege merely founded upon custom, but settled and ratified by the laws of Christian emperors; concerning the particular cases whereof, together with the extent and limitation of these immunities, there are no less than six several laws of the emperors Theodosius, Arcadius, and Theodosius junior, yet extant in the Theodosian code.[h] But how far those asylas and sanctuaries were good and useful, and to what evil and pernicious purposes they were improved in after-times, is without the limits of my present task to inquire.

But if in those times there was so little ground for altars, (as used in the present sense of the church of Rome,) there was yet far less for images; and certainly, might things be carried by a fair and impartial trial of antiquity, the dispute would soon be at an end; there not being any one just and good authority to prove, that images were either worshipped, or used in churches, for near upon four hundred years after Christ; and I doubt not but it might be carried much further, but that my business lies mainly within those first ages of Christianity. Nothing can be more clear, than that the Christians were frequently challenged by the heathens, as for having no altars and temples, so that they had no image or statues in them, and that the Christian apologists never denied it, but industriously defended themselves against the charge, and rejected the very thoughts of any such thing with contempt and scorn; as might be abundantly made good from Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Minutius Felix, Arnobius, and Lactantius, many of whose testimonies have been formerly pointed to. Amongst other things, Origen plainly tells his adversary,[i] (who had objected this to the Christians,) that the images that were to be dedicated to God were not to be carved by the hand of artists, but to be formed and fashioned in us by the word of God, viz. the virtues of justice and temperance, of wisdom and piety, &c., that conform us to the

[h] Lib. ix. tit. xlv. de his qui ad Ecclesias confugiunt.

[i] Contr. Cels. l. viii. s. 17.

image of his only Son. "These (says he) are the only statues formed in our minds, and by which alone we are persuaded it is fit to do honour to him who is the image of the invisible God, the prototype and architypal pattern of all such images." Had Christians then given adoration to them, or but set them up in their places of worship, with what face can we suppose they should have told the world, that they so much slighted and abhorred them; and, indeed, what a hearty detestation they universally shewed to any thing that had but the least shadow of idolatry, has been before proved at large. The council of Illiberis [k] that was held in Spain sometime before Constantine expressly provided against it, decreeing that "no pictures ought to be in the church, nor that any thing that is worshipped and adored should be painted upon the walls:" words so clear and positive, as not to be evaded by all the little shifts and glosses which the expositors of that canon would put upon it. The first use of statues and pictures in public churches was merely historical, or to add some beauty and ornament to the place, which after-ages improved into superstition and idolatry. The first that we meet with, upon good authority, (for all the instances brought for the first ages are either false and spurious, or impertinent and to no purpose,) is no elder than the times of Epiphanius, and then too met with no very welcome entertainment, as may appear from Epiphanius's own epistle, translated by St. Jerome; [1] where the story, in short, is this: "coming (says he) to Anablatha, a village in Palestine, and going into a church to pray, I espied a curtain hanging over the door, whereon was painted the image of Christ, or of some saint; which when I looked upon, and saw the image of a man hanging up in the church, contrary to the authority of the holy scriptures, I presently rent it, and advised the guardians of the church rather to make use of it as a winding-sheet for some poor man's burying. Whereat when they were a little troubled, and said, 'it was but just, that since I had rent that curtain I should change it, and give them another;' I promised them I would, and have now sent the best I could get, and pray entreat them to accept it, and give command that for the time to come no such curtains, being contrary to our religion, may be hung up in the church of Christ; it more becoming your place

[k] Can. 36.

[1] Inter opera Hieron. vol. ii. p. 161.

solicitously to remove whatever is offensive to, and unworthy of, the church of Christ, and the people committed to your charge." This was written to John, bishop of Jerusalem, in whose diocese the thing had been done: and the case is so much the more pressing and weighty, by how much the greater esteem and value Epiphanius, (then bishop of Salamis in Cyprus,) for his great age and excellent learning, had in the church of God. This instance is so home and pregnant, that the patrons of image worship are at a mighty loss what to say to it; and, after all, are forced to cry out against it as supposititious. Bellarmine,[m] brings no less than nine arguments (if such they may be called) to make it seem probable: but had he been ingenuous, he might have given one reason more true and satisfactory than all the rest, why that part of the epistle should be thought forged and spurious, viz. because it makes so much against them. More might be produced to this purpose; but by this I hope it is clear enough, that the honest Christians of those times, as they thought it sufficient to pray to God without making their addresses to saints and angels, so they accounted their churches fine enough without pictures and images to adorn them.

Their churches being built and beautified, (so far as consisted with the ability and simplicity of those days,) they sought to derive a greater value and esteem upon them by some peculiar consecration; for the wisdom and piety of those times thought it not enough barely to devote them to the public services of religion, unless they also set them apart with solemn rites of a formal dedication. This had been an ancient custom both amongst Jews and Gentiles, as old as Solomon's temple, nay, as Moses and the tabernacle. When it was first taken up by Christians, is not easy to determine; only I do not remember to have met with the footsteps of any such thing in any approved writer, (for the decretal epistles, every one knows what their faith is,) till the reign of Constantine. In his time, Christianity being become more prosperous and successful, churches were every where erected and repaired; and no sooner were so, but (as Eusebius tells us[n]) they were solemnly consecrated, and the dedications celebrated with great festivity and rejoicing: an instance whereof he then gives of the famous church of Tyre, at the dedication whereof he himself made that excellent oration

[m] De Eccles. Triumph. l. ii. c. 9.

[n] Hist. Eccl. l. x. c. 3.

inserted into the body of his history. About the thirtieth year of his reign, he built a stately church at Jerusalem,[o] over the sepulchre of our Saviour, which was dedicated with singular magnificence and veneration; and for the greater honour, by his imperial letters, he summoned the bishops, who from all parts of the East were then met in council at Tyre, to be present and assisting at the solemnity. The rites and ceremonies used at these dedications, (as we find in Eusebius,) were a great confluence of bishops and strangers from all parts, the performance of divine offices, singing of hymns and psalms, reading and expounding of the scriptures, sermons and orations, receiving the holy sacrament, prayers and thanksgivings, liberal alms bestowed on the poor, and great gifts given to the church, and, in short, mighty expressions of mutual love and kindness, and universal rejoicing with one another. What other particular ceremonies were introduced afterwards concerns not me to inquire; only let me note, that under some of the Christian emperors, when paganism lay gasping for life, and their temples were purged and converted into Christian churches, they were usually consecrated only by placing a cross in them, as the venerable ensign of the Christian religion, as appears by the law of Theodosius the Younger to that purpose.[p] The memory of the dedication of that church at Jerusalem was constantly continued and kept alive in that church;[q] and once a year, to wit, on the 14th of September, on which day it had been dedicated, was solemnized with great pomp and much confluence of people from all parts, the solemnity usually lasting eight days together: which doubtless gave birth to that custom of keeping anniversary days of commemoration of the dedication of churches, which from this time forwards we frequently meet with in the histories of the church, and much prevailed in after-ages, some shadow whereof still remains amongst us at this day, in the wakes observed in several counties; which, in correspondence with the *encænia* of the ancient church, are annual festivals kept in country villages in memory of the dedication of their particular churches.

And because it was a custom in some ages of the church, that no church should be consecrated till it was endowed, it may

[o] De vit. Const. l. ii. c. 42, 43.

[p] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. x. de Pag. Sacrific. et Templis l. 25. ubi vid. Com. Gothofr.

[q] Niceph. Cal. Hist. Eccl. l. viii. c. 50.

give us occasion to inquire what revenues churches had in those first ages of Christianity. It is more than probable, that, for a great while, they had no other public incomes, than either what arose out of those common contributions which they made at their usual assemblies, every one giving or offering according to his ability or devotion, which was put into a common stock or treasury, or what proceeded from the offerings which they made out of the improvement of their lands, the apostolic canons[r] providing that their first-fruits should be partly offered at the church, partly sent home to the bishops and presbyters. The care of all which was committed to the president, or bishop of the church; (for who, says the author of the forecited canons,[s] is fitter to be trusted with the riches and revenues of the church, than he who is entrusted with the precious souls of men;) and by him disposed of for the maintenance of the clergy, the relief of the poor, or whatever necessities of the church. As Christianity increased, and times grew better, they obtained more proper and fixed revenues, houses and lands being settled upon them; for such it is certain they had even during the times of persecution: for so we find in a law of Constantine and Licinius,[t] where, giving liberty of religion to Christians, and restoring them freely to the churches which had been taken from them, and disposed of by former emperors, they further add, "and because (say they) the same Christians had not only places wherein they were wont to assemble, but are also known to have had other possessions, which were not the propriety of any single person, but belonged to the whole body and community. All these, by this law, we command to be immediately restored to these Christians, to every society and community of them what belonged to them." And in a rescript to Anulinus the proconsul,[u] about the same matter, they particularly specify whether they be gardens or houses, or whatever else belonged to the right and propriety of those churches, that with all speed they be universally restored to them;[x] the same which Maximinus also (though no good friend to Christians, yet either out of fear of Constantine, or from the conviction of his conscience, awakened by a terrible sickness) had ordained for his parts of the empire. Afterwards, Constantine set himself by all ways to advance the honour and

[r] Can, 3, 4. [s] Can. 41. [t] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. xx. c. 5.
[u] Id. ibid. [x] Lib. ix. c. ult.

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interests of the church.[y] Out of the tributes of every city, which were yearly paid into his exchequer, he assigned a portion to the church and clergy of that place; and settled it by a law, which (excepting the short reign of Julian, who revoked it[z]) was, as the historian assures us,[a] in force in his time. Where any of the martyrs or confessors had died without kindred, or been banished their native country, and left no heirs behind them, he ordained that their estates and inheritance should be given to the church of that place; and that whoever had seized upon them, or had bought them of the exchequer, should restore them, and refer themselves to him for what recompense should be made them. He took away the restraint which former emperors had laid upon the bounty of pious and charitable men, and gave every man liberty to leave what he would to the church.[b] He gave salaries out of the public corn, which (though taken away by Julian) was restored by his successor Jovianus,[c] and ratified as a perpetual donation by the law of Valentinian and Marcianus. After his time the revenues of churches increased every day, pious and devout persons thinking they could never enough testify their piety to God, by expressing their bounty and liberality to the church.

I shall conclude this discourse by observing what respect and reverence they were wont in those days to shew in the church, as the solemn place of worship, and where God did more peculiarly manifest his presence. And this certainly was very great. They came into the church, as into the palace of the great king, (as Chrysostom calls it,[d]) with fear and trembling, upon which account he there presses the highest modesty and gravity upon them. Before their going into the church they used to wash, at least, their hands, as Tertullian probably intimates,[e] and Chrysostom expressly tells us,[f] carrying themselves while there with the most profound silence and devotion. Nay, so great was the reverence which they bore to the church, that the emperors themselves, who otherwise never went without their guard about them, yet, when they came to go into the church,

[y] Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 8.
[z] Id. l. v. c. 5.
[a] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. ii. c. 36. et seq.
[b] Cod. Theodos. lib. i. tit. ii. de SS. Eccl. l. 1.
[c] Ibid. l. 12.
[d] Ep. ad Heb. in c. 9. Hom. xv. s. 4. vol. xii. p. 156.
[e] De Orat. c. 11.
[f] Chrysost. Hom. li. (al. lii.) in Matt. s. 4. vol. vii. p. 526. Hom. in Joan. lxxiii. (al. lxxii.) s. 3. vol. viii. p. 433.

used to lay down their arms, to leave their guard behind them, and to put off their crowns, reckoning that the less ostentation they made of power and greatness there, the more firmly the imperial majesty would be entailed upon them; as we find it in the law of Theodosius and Valentinian, inserted at large into the last edition of the Theodosian Code.[t] But of this we may probably speak more when we come to treat of the manner of their public adoration.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE LORD'S DAY, AND THE FASTS AND FESTIVALS OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

Time as necessary to religious actions as place. Fixed times of public worship observed by all nations. The Lord's day chiefly observed by Christians. Styled Sunday, and why. Peculiarly consecrated to the memory of Christ's resurrection. All kneeling at prayer on this day forbidden, and why. Their public assemblies constantly held upon this day. Forced to assemble before day in times of persecution; thence jeered by the heathens as *lutebrosa et lucifugax natio*. The Lord's day ever kept as a day of rejoicing; all fasting upon it forbidden. The great care of Constantine, and the first Christian emperors, for the honour and observance of this day. Their laws to that purpose. Their constant and conscientious attendance upon public worship on the Lord's day. Canons of ancient councils about absenting from public worship. *Sabbatum*, or Saturday, kept in the East as a religious day, with all the public solemnities of divine worship. How it came to be so. Otherwise in the Western churches; observed by them as a fast, and why. This not universal. St. Ambrose's practice at Milan, and counsel to St. Augustine in the case. Their solemn fasts, either weekly or annual; weekly on Wednesdays and Fridays, held till three in the afternoon. Annual fasts, that of Lent, how ancient. Upon what account called *Quadragesima*. Observed with great strictness. The *Hebdomada Magna*, or the Holy Week, kept with singular austerity, and the reason of it. Festivals observed by the primitive Christians. That of Easter as ancient as the times of the apostles. An account of the famous controversy between the Eastern and Western churches about the keeping of Easter. The intemperate spirit of pope Victor. Irenæus's moderate interposal. The case finally determined by the council of Nice. The vigils of this feast observed with great expressions of rejoicing. The bounty of Christian emperors upon Easter-day. The feast of Pentecost, how ancient. Why styled Whitsunday. *Dominica in Albis*, why so called. The whole space between Easter and Whitsuntide kept festival. The Acts of the apostles, why publicly read during that time. The feast of Epiphany, anciently what. Christmas-day, the ancient observation of it. Epiphany, in a strict sense, what, and why so called. The *Memoriæ Martyrum*, what; when probably first begun. The great reverence they had for martyrs. Their passions styled their birth-

[t] Lib. ix. tit. xlv. l. 4. Vid. Chrys. Hom. post redit. ab. exil. s. 2. vol. iii. p. 428.

day, and why. These anniversary solemnities kept at the tombs of martyrs. Over these magnificent churches erected afterwards. What religious exercises performed at those meetings. The first rise of martyrologies. Oblations for martyrs. How understood in the ancient writers of the church. These festivals kept with great rejoicing, mutual love, and charity. Their *συμπόσια*, or common feasts. Markets held for that purpose in those places. The ill use which after-times made of these memorials.

Time is a circumstance no less inseparable from religious actions than place; for man, consisting of a soul and body, cannot always be actually engaged in the service of God, that is the privilege of angels and souls freed from the fetters of mortality. So long as we are here, we must worship God with respect to our present state, and consequently of necessity have some definite and particular time to do it in. Now, that man might not be left to a floating uncertainty in a matter of so great importance, in all ages and nations men have been guided by the very dictates of nature, to pitch upon some certain seasons wherein to assemble and meet together to perform the public offices of religion. What and how many were the public festivals instituted and observed either amongst Jews or Gentiles, I am not concerned to take notice of. For the ancient Christians, they ever had their peculiar seasons, their solemn and stated times of meeting together to perform the common duties of divine worship; of which, because the Lord's day challenges the precedency of all the rest, we shall begin first with that. And being unconcerned in all the controversies which in the late times were raised about it, I shall only note some instances of the piety of Christians in reference to this day, which I have observed in passing through the writers of those times. For the name of this day of public worship, it is sometimes (especially by Justin Martyr and Tertullian) called Sunday, because it happened upon that day of the week, which by the heathens was dedicated to the sun, and therefore, as being best known to them, the fathers commonly made use of it in their apologies to the heathen governors. This title continued after the world became Christian, and seldom it is that it passeth under any other name in the imperial edicts of the first Christian emperors. But the more proper and prevailing name was *κυριακὴ*, or *dies Dominica*, "the Lord's day," as it is called by St. John himself,[g] as being that day of the week whereon our Lord made his triumphant

[g] Rev. i. 10.

return from the dead. This, Justin Martyr[h] assures us, was the true original of the title: "Upon Sunday (says he) we all assemble and meet together, as being the first day wherein God, parting the darkness from the rude chaos, created the world, and the same day whereon Jesus Christ our Saviour rose again from the dead; for he was crucified the day before Saturday, and the day after (which is Sunday) he appeared to his apostles and disciples." By this means observing a kind of analogy and proportion with the Jewish sabbath, which had been instituted by God himself. For as that day was kept as a commemoration of God's sabbath, or resting from the work of creation, so was this set apart for religious uses, as the solemn memorial of Christ's resting from the work of our redemption in this world, completed upon the day of his resurrection. Which brings into my mind that custom of theirs so universally common in those days, that whereas at other times they kneeled at prayers, on the Lord's day they always prayed standing, as is expressly affirmed both by Justin Martyr[i] and Tertullian;[j] the reason of which we find in the author of the Questions and Answers in Justin Martyr.[k] "It is (says he) that by this means we may be put in mind both of our fall by sin, and our resurrection or restitution by the grace of Christ: that for six days we pray upon our knees, is in token of our fall by sin; but that on the Lord's day we do not bow the knee, does symbolically represent our resurrection, by which, through the grace of Christ, we are delivered from our sins and the powers of death." This, he there tells us, was a custom derived from the very times of the apostles, for which he cites Irenæus in his book concerning Easter. And this custom was maintained with so much vigour, that when some began to neglect it, the great council of Nice took notice of it,[l] and ordained that there should be a constant uniformity in this case, and that on the Lord's day, and at such other times as were usual, men should stand when they made their prayers to God. So fit and reasonable did they think it, to do all possible honour to that day, on which Christ rose from the dead. Therefore we may observe all along in the sacred story, that after Christ's resurrection the apostles and primitive Christians did especially assemble upon "the first day of the

[h] Apol. i. s. 67. [i] Ibid. [j] De Coron. c. 3.
[k] Resp. ad Quest. 115. [l] Can. 20.

week." And whatever they might do at other times, yet there are many passages that intimate, that the first day of the week was their more solemn time of meeting. On this day it was that they were met together when our Saviour first appeared to them, and so again the next week after. On this day they were assembled when the Holy Ghost so visibly came down upon them, when Peter preached that excellent sermon, converted and baptized three thousand souls. Thus, when St. Paul was taking his leave at Troas, upon the "first day of the week," when the disciples came together to "break bread,"[m] i. e. as almost all agree, to celebrate the holy sacrament, he preached to them, sufficiently intimating that upon that day it was their usual custom to meet in that manner. And elsewhere giving directions to the church of Corinth (as he had done in the like case to other churches) concerning their contributions to the poor suffering brethren, he bids them lay it aside upon the first day of the week, which seems plainly to respect their religious assemblies upon that day, for then it was that every one, according to his ability, deposited something to the relief of the poor and the uses of the church.

After the apostles, the Christians constantly observed this day; meeting together for prayer, expounding and hearing of the scriptures, celebration of the sacraments, and other public duties of religion. "Upon the day called Sunday, (says Justin Martyr,[n]) all of us, that live either in city or country, meet together in one place:" and what they then did he there describes, of which afterwards. This doubtless Pliny meant,[o] when, giving Trajan an account of the Christians, he tells him, that they were wont to meet together to worship Christ, *stato die*, upon a set certain day, by which he can be reasonably understood to design no other but the Lord's day; for though they probably met at other times, yet he takes notice of this only, either because the Christians, whom he had examined, had not told him of their meeting at other times, or because this was their most public and solemn convention, and which in a manner swallowed up the rest. By a violent persecution of those times, the Christians were forced to meet together before day; so Pliny in the same place tells the emperor, that they assembled "before daylight to sing their morning hymns to Christ:" whence it is that

[m] 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. [n] Apol. i. s. 67. [o] Lib. x. ep. 97.

Tertullian so often mentions their nocturnal convocations;[p] for putting the case that his wife after his decease should marry with a Gentile husband, amongst other inconveniencies, he asks her, whether she thought he would be willing to let her rise from his bed to go to their night-meetings? and in the case of persecution, he tells Fabius,[q] that if they could not celebrate *Dominica solennia*, their Lord's-day solemnities, in the day times, they had the night sufficiently clear with the light of Christ. This gave occasion to their spiteful adversaries to calumniate and asperse them. The heathen in Minutius charges them with their night-congregations,[r] upon which account they are there scornfully called *latebrosa et lucifugax natio*, "an obscure and skulking generation." And the very first thing that Celsus objects is, that the Christians had private and clancular assemblies or combinations: to which Origen answers,[s] that if it were so they might thank them for it, who would not suffer them to exercise it more openly; that the Christian doctrine was sufficiently evident and obvious, and better known through the world than the opinion and sentiments of their best philosophers; and that if there were some mysteries in the Christian religion which were not communicated to every one, it was no other thing than what was common in the several sects of their own philosophy. But to return.

They looked upon the Lord's day as a time to be celebrated with great expressions of joy, as being the happy memory of Christ's resurrection, and accordingly restrained whatever might savour of sorrow and sadness; fasting on that day they prohibited with the greatest severity, accounting it utterly unlawful, as Tertullian informs us.[t] It was a very bitter censure, that of Ignatius,[u] (or whosesoever that epistle was, for certainly it was not his,) that whoever fasts on a Lord's day is a murderer of Christ: however, it is certain, that they never fasted on those days, no, not in the time of Lent itself. Nay, the Montanists, though otherwise great pretenders to fasting and mortification, did yet abstain from it on the Lord's day: and as they accounted it a joyful and good day, so they did whatever they thought might contribute to the honour of it. No sooner was Constantine

[p] Ad uxor. l. ii. c. 4.
[r] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 8.
De Coron. mil. c. 3.
[q] De fug. in persecut. c. 14.
[s] Orig. adv. Cels. l. i. s. 1, etc.
[u] Ep. ad Philip. s. 13.

come over to the church,[w] but his principal care was about the Lord's day: he commanded it to be solemnly observed, and that by all persons whatsoever: he made it to all a day of rest, that men might have nothing to do but to worship God, and be better instructed in the Christian faith, and spend their whole time, without any thing to hinder them, in prayer and devotion, according to the custom and discipline of the church. And for those in his army, who yet remained in their paganism and infidelity, he commanded them upon Lord's days to go out into the fields, and there pour out their souls in hearty prayers to God. And that none might pretend their own inability to the duty, he himself composed and gave them a short form of prayer, which he enjoined them to make use of every Lord's day: so careful was he that this day should not be dishonoured or misemployed, even by those who were yet strangers and enemies to Christianity. He moreover ordained,[x] that there should be no courts of judicature open upon this day, no suits or trials at law; but that for any works of mercy, such as the emancipating and setting free of slaves or servants, this might be done. That there should be no suits nor demanding debts upon this day, was confirmed by several laws of succeeding emperors;[y] and that no arbitrators, who had the umpirage of any business lying before them, should at that time have power to determine or take up litigious causes, penalties being entailed upon any that transgressed herein. Theodosius the Great, (anno 386,) by a second law ratified one which he had passed long before, wherein he expressly prohibited all public shows upon the Lord's day, that the worship of God might not be confounded with those profane solemnities.[z] This law the younger Theodosius some few years after confirmed and enlarged; enacting,[a] that on the Lord's day, (and some other festivals there mentioned,) not only Christians, but even Jews and heathens should be restrained from the pleasure of all sights and spectacles, and the theatres be shut up in every place. And whereas it might so happen, that the birth-day or inauguration of the emperor might fall upon that day, therefore, to let the people know how infinitely he preferred

[w] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 18, 19, 20.

[x] Cod. Just. lib. iii. tit. xii. de feriis, l. 3.

[y] Cod. Theodos. lib. ii. tit. viii. de feriis, l. 1. lib. i. tit. viii. l. 3.

[z] Ibid. lib. xv. tit. v. de Spectac. l. 2. [a] Ibid. l. v. Dominico.

the honour of God before the concerns of his own majesty and greatness, he commanded, that if it should so happen, that then the imperial solemnity should be put off, and deferred till another day.

I shall take notice but of one instance more of their great observance of this day, and that was their constant attendance upon the solemnities of public worship. They did not think it enough to read, and pray, and praise God at home, but made conscience of appearing in the public assemblies, from which nothing but sickness and absolute necessity did detain them: and if sick, or in prison, or under banishment, nothing troubled them more, than that they could not come to church, and join their devotions to the common services. If persecution at any time forced them to keep a little close, yet no sooner was there the least mitigation, but they presently returned to their open duty, and publicly met all together. No trivial pretences, no light excuses were then admitted for any one's absence from the congregation; but, according to the merit of the cause, severe censures were passed upon them. The synod of Illiberis provided,[b] that if any man dwelling in a city (where usually churches were nearest at hand) should for three Lord's days absent himself from the church, he should for some time be suspended the communion, that he might appear to be corrected for his fault. They allowed no separate assemblies, no congregations but what met in the public church. If any man took upon him to make a breach, and to draw people into corners, he was presently condemned, and a suitable penalty put upon him. When Eustathius, bishop of Sebastia, (a man pretending to great strictness and austerity of life,) began to cast off the discipline of the church, and to introduce many odd observations of his own; amongst others, to contemn priests that were married, to fast on the Lord's day, and to keep meetings in private houses; drawing away many, but especially women, (as the historian observes,[c]) who, leaving their husbands, were led away with error, and from that into great filthiness and impurity. No sooner did the bishops of those parts discover it, but meeting in council at Gangra, the metropolis of Paphlagonia, about the year 340, they condemned and cast them out of the church, passing these two canons amongst the rest:[d] "If any one shall teach that the

[b] Can. 21. [c] Sozom. l. iii. c. 14. [d] Conc. Gangr. Can. 4, 5.

house of God is to be despised, and the assemblies that are held in it, let him be accursed. If any shall take upon him out of the church privately to preach at home, and making light of the church, shall do those things that belong only to the church, without the presence of the priest, and the leave and allowance of the bishop, let him be accursed." Correspondent to which, the canons called apostolical,[e] and the council of Antioch ordain, that if any presbyter, setting light by his own bishop, shall withdraw and set up separate meetings, and erect another altar, (i. e. says Zonaras, keep unlawful conventicles, preach privately, and administer the sacrament,) that in such a case he shall be deposed as ambitious and tyrannical, and the people communicating with him be excommunicate as being factious and schismatical: only this not to be done till after the third admonition. After all that has been said, I might further shew what esteem and value the first Christians had of the Lord's day, by those great and honourable things they have spoken concerning it, of which I will produce but two passages: the one is, that in the epistle *ad Magnesios*, which, if not Ignatius's, must yet be acknowledged an ancient author. "Let every one (says he[f]) that loves Christ keep the Lord's day festival, the resurrection day, the queen and empress of all days, in which our life was raised again, and death conquered by our Lord and Saviour." The other, that of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria,[g] who speaks thus: "that both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honour the Lord's day, and keep it festival; seeing on that day it was that our Lord Jesus Christ completed his resurrection from the dead."

Next to the Lord's day, the Sabbath or Saturday (for so the word *sabbatum* is constantly used in the writings of the fathers, when speaking of it as it relates to Christians) was held by them in great veneration, and especially in the Eastern parts honoured with all the public solemnities of religion. For which we are to know, that the gospel in those parts mainly prevailing amongst the Jews, they being generally the first converts to the Christian faith, they still retained a mighty reverence for the Mosaic institutions, and especially for the sabbath, as that which had been appointed by God himself, (as the memorial of his rest from

[e] Can. 31. Conc. Antioch. Can. 5. [f] Sect. 9.

[g] Edict. Theoph. apud Balsam. in Synod. vol. ii. par. i. p. 170.

the work of creation,) settled by their great master Moses, and celebrated by their ancestors for so many ages, as the solemn day of their public worship, and were therefore very loth that it should be wholly antiquated and laid aside. For this reason it seemed good to the prudence of those times, (as in others of the Jewish rites, so in this,) to indulge the humour of that people, and to keep the sabbath as a day for religious offices. Hence they usually had most parts of divine service performed upon that day; they met together for public prayers, for reading the scriptures, celebration of the sacraments, and such like duties. This is plain, not only from some passages in Ignatius and Clemens's Constitutions, but from writers of more unquestionable credit and authority. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, tells us,[h] that they assembled on Saturdays, not that they were infected with Judaism, but only to worship Jesus Christ, the Lord of the sabbath; and Socrates,[i] speaking of the usual times of their public meeting, calls the sabbath and the Lord's day, the weekly festivals, on which the congregation was wont to meet in the church for the performance of divine services. Therefore the council of Laodicea amongst other things decreed,[k] that upon Saturdays the gospels and other scriptures should be read, that in Lent the eucharist should not be celebrated but upon Saturday and the Lord's day, and upon those days only in the time of Lent it should be lawful to commemorate and rehearse the names of martyrs. Upon this day also, as well as upon Sunday, all fasts were severely prohibited, (an infallible argument they counted it a festival day,) one Saturday in the year only excepted, viz. that before Easter-day, which was always observed as a solemn fast: things so commonly known as to need no proof. But though the church thought fit thus far to correspond with the Jewish converts, as solemnly to observe the sabbath; yet to take away all offence, and to vindicate themselves from compliance with Judaism, they openly declared, that they did it only in a Christian way, and kept it not as a Jewish sabbath, as is expressly affirmed by Athanasius,[l] Nazianzen, and others; and the forementioned Laodicean synod has a canon to this purpose;[m] "that Christians should not Judaize, and rest from all labour on the sabbath, but follow their ordinary

[h] Homil. de Sement. in init.
[i] Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 8.
[k] Can. 16.
[l] Athan. Homil. de Sement. s. 1.
[m] Can. 29.

works, (i. e. so far as consisted with their attendance upon the public assemblies,) and should not entertain such thoughts of it, but that still they should prefer the Lord's day before it; and on that day rest as Christians: but if any were found to Judaize, they should be accursed."

Thus stood the case in the Eastern church; in those in the West we find it somewhat different. Amongst them, it was not observed as a religious festival, but kept as a constant fast. The reason whereof (as it is given by pope Innocent, in an epistle to the bishop of Eugubium, where he treats of this very case) seems most probable; "if (says he[n]) we commemorate Christ's resurrection not only at Easter, but every Lord's day, and fast upon Friday, because it was the day of his passion, we ought not to pass by Saturday, which is the middle-time between the days of grief and joy; the apostles themselves spending those two days (viz. Friday and the sabbath) in great sorrow and heaviness:" and he thinks no doubt ought to be made, but that the apostles fasted upon those two days; whence the church had a tradition, that the sacraments were not to be administered on those days, and therefore concludes that every Saturday, or sabbath, ought to be kept a fast. To the same purpose the council of Illiberis ordained,[o] that a Saturday festival was an error that ought to be reformed, and that men ought to fast upon every sabbath. But though this seems to have been the general practice, yet it did not obtain in all places of the West alike. In Italy itself, it was otherwise at Milan, where Saturday was a festival; and it is said in the Life of St. Ambrose,[p] who was bishop of that see, that he constantly dined as well upon Saturday as the Lord's day, (it being his custom to dine upon no other days but those, and the memorials of the martyrs,) and used also upon that day to preach to the people; though so great was the prudence and moderation of that good man, that he bound not up himself in these indifferent things, but when he was at Milan he dined upon Saturdays, and when he was at Rome he fasted as they did upon those days: this St. Augustine[q] assures us he had from his own mouth; for when his mother Monica came after him to Milan, (where he then resided,) she was greatly troubled to find the Saturday fast not kept there as she had found it in other places; for her satisfaction he immediately went to consult

[n] Innocent. Ep. ad Decium Eugubin. c. 4.
[o] Can. 36.
[p] Paulin. in vit. Ambr. opp. Ambros. præfix.
[q] Ad Januar. Epist. 118.

St. Ambrose, then bishop of that place, who told him he could give him no better advice in the cause, than to do as he did: "When I come to Rome, (said he) I fast on the Saturday as they do at Rome; when I am here, I do not fast. So likewise you, to whatsoever church you come, observe the custom of that place, if you mean not either to give or take offence." With this answer he satisfied his mother; and ever after, when he thought of it, looked upon it as an oracle sent from heaven. So that even in Italy the Saturday fast was not universally observed. Nay, a very learned man,[r] (and a bishop of the Roman church,) thinks it highly probable, that for the first ages especially, Saturday was no more kept as a fast at Rome than in the churches of the East: though the great argument whereby he would establish it, viz. because some Latin churches, who must needs follow the pattern of the church of Rome, did not keep it so, is very infirm and weak; and needs no more than that very instance of the church of Milan to refute it, which, though under the pope's nose, did not yet keep that day as a fast, although this was many years after it had been so established and observed at Rome.

And now that I am got into this business, I shall once for all despatch the matter about their fasts, before I proceed to their other festivals. It is certain, the ancient Christians had two sorts of solemn fasts, weekly and annual. Their weekly fasts (called *jejunia quartæ et sextæ feriæ*) were kept upon Wednesdays and Fridays, appointed so, as we are told, for this reason, because on Wednesday our Lord was betrayed by Judas, on Friday he was crucified by the Jews.[s] This custom Epiphanius[t] (how truly I know not) refers to the apostles; and elsewhere tells us, that those days were observed as fasts through the whole world. These fasts they called their stations, (not because they stood all the while, but by an allusion to the military stations, and keeping their guards, as Tertullian observes,[u] they kept close at it,) and they usually lasted, ἕως ὥρας ἐννάτης, as Epiphanius informs us,[x] "till the ninth hour," i. e. till three of the clock in the afternoon; at which time, having ended their fast devotions, they received the eucharist, and then broke up the station, and went home; whence it is, that Tertullian calls them,[y] *stationum*

[r] Albasp. de vet. Eccl. rit. obs. 13.
[s] Vid Constit. Apost. l. v. c. 14; l. vii. c. 24.
[t] Expos. fid. cathol. c. 22. Hæres. lxxv. c. 6.
[u] De Orat. c. 14.
[x] Expos. fid. cathol. c. 22.
[y] De jejun. c. 13.

semijejunia, the "half fasts of stations:" and he seems to censure the practice of some,[z] who, having privately resolved upon an entire fast of the whole day, refused to receive the eucharist at the public stationary fasts, because they thought that by eating and drinking the sacramental elements, they put a period to their fasting:[a] for it was usual in those times with many, after the stationary fasts were ended, to continue and hold on the fast until the evening. The historian tells us,[b] that it had been a very ancient custom in the church of Alexandria, upon these days to have the scriptures read and expounded, and all other parts of divine service, except the celebration of the sacrament, and that it was chiefly in those days that Origen was wont to teach the people: whether the omitting of the sacrament then might be a peculiar custom to that church, I know not, certain I am, it was upon those days administered in other places. So St. Basil,[c] enumerating the times how oft they received it every week, expressly puts Wednesday and Friday into the number. The remains of these primitive stations are yet observed in our church at this day, which by her fifteenth canon has ordained, "that though Wednesdays and Fridays be not holy days, yet that weekly upon those times minister and people shall resort to church, at the accustomed hours of prayer."

Their annual fast was that of Lent, by way of preparation to the feast of our Saviour's resurrection. This (though not in the modern use of it) was very ancient, though far from being an apostolical canon, as a learned prelate of our church has fully proved.[d] From the very first age of the Christian church, it was customary to fast before Easter: but for how long, it was variously observed, according to different times and places; some fasting so many days, others so many weeks, and some so many days on each week;[e] and it is most probably thought that it was at first styled τεσσαρακοστὴ, or *Quadragesima*, not because it was a fast of forty days, but of forty hours, begun about twelve on Friday, (the time of our Saviour's falling under the power of death,) and continued till Sunday morning, the time of his rising from the dead. Afterwards it was enlarged to a longer time,

[z] De Orat. c. 14.
[a] Vid. de jejun. c. 8.
[b] Socrat. l. v. c. 22.
[c] Epist. xciii. ad Cæsar. Patric.
[d] Bishop Tayl. Duct. Dub. l. iii. c. 4.
[e] Id. ibid. Vid. Thorndike's Rel. Assembl. c. 8.

drawn out into more days, and then weeks, till it came to three, and at last to six or seven weeks. But concerning the different observations of it in several places, let them who desire to know more consult Socrates and Sozomen,[f] who both speak enough about it. This Quadragesimal fast was kept in those times with great piety and religion, people generally applying themselves with all seriousness to acts of penance and mortification, whence Chrysostom calls Lent, the remedy and physic of our souls:[g] and to the end that the observation of it might be more grave and solemn, Theodosius the Great and his colleague emperors passed two laws,[h] that during the time of Lent all process and inquiry into criminal actions should be suspended, and no corporal punishments inflicted upon any; it being unfit (as the second of those laws expresses it) that in the holy time of Lent, the body should suffer punishment while the soul is expecting absolution. But with what care soever they kept the preceding parts, it is certain they kept the close of it with a mighty strictness and austerity; I mean the last week of it, that which immediately preceded the feast of Easter;[i] this they consecrated to more particular acts of prayer, abstinence, and devotion: and whereas in the other parts of Lent they ended their fast in the evening, in this they extended it to the cock-crowing, or first glimpse of the morning; to be sure they ended it not before midnight, for to break up the fast before that time was accounted a piece of great profaneness and intemperance, as Dionysius,[k] bishop of Alexandria, determines in a letter to Basilides, wherein he largely and learnedly states the case. This was the *Hebdomada magna*, "the great (or holy) week:" "so called, (says Chrysostom,[l]) not that it has either more hours or days in it than other weeks, but because this is the week in which truly great and ineffable good things were purchased for us; within this time death was conquered, the curse destroyed, the devil's tyranny dissolved, his instruments broken, heaven opened, angels rejoiced, the partition-wall broken down, and God and man reconciled. For this cause we call it the "great week;" for this cause men fast, and watch, and do alms, to

[f] Socrat. l. v. c. 22. Sozom. l. vii. c. 19.
[g] Hom. i. in Gen. s. 1. vol. iv. p. 1.
[h] Cod. Theodos. lib. ix. tit. xxxv. de question. 4, 5.
[i] Constit. Apost. l. v. c. 17, 18. Epiph. Expos. fid. cathol. c. 22.
[k] Apud Zonar. in Synod. vol. ii. par. i. p. 1.
[l] Hom. xxx. in Gen. s. 1. vol. iv. p. 294.

do the greater honour to it: the emperors themselves, to shew what veneration they have for this time, commanding all suits and processes at law to cease, tribunal-doors to be shut up, and prisoners to be set free; imitating herein their great Lord and Master, who, by his death, at this time delivered us from the prison and the chains of sin:" meaning herein those laws of Theodosius, Gratian, and Valentinian, which we lately mentioned.

We proceed now to inquire what other festivals there were in those first ages of the church; which I find to be chiefly these: Easter, Whitsuntide, and Epiphany, which comprehended two, Christmas and Epiphany, properly so called. I reckon them not in their proper order, but as I suppose them to have taken place in the church. Of these, Easter challenges the precedence, both for its antiquity, and the great stir about it. That in and from the very times of the apostles, (besides the weekly returns of the Lord's day,) there has been always observed an anniversary festival in memory of Christ's resurrection, no man can doubt that has any insight into the affairs of the ancient church: all the dispute was about the particular time when it was to be kept, which became the matter of as famous a controversy as any that in those ages exercised the Christian world. The state of the case was briefly this: the churches of Asia the Less kept their Easter upon the same day whereon the Jews celebrated their passover, viz. upon the first day of the first month, (which always began with the appearance of the moon,) mostly answering to our March, and this they did upon what day of the week soever it fell, and hence were styled "Quartodecimans," because keeping Easter *quarta decima luna*, upon the fourteenth day after the φάσις, or appearance of the moon. The other churches, and especially those of the West, did not follow this custom, but kept Easter upon the Lord's day following the day of the Jewish passover, partly the more to honour the day, and partly to distinguish between Jews and Christians. The Asiatics pleaded for themselves the practice of the apostles; Polycarpus, bishop of Smyrna, who had lived and conversed with them, having kept it upon that day, together with St. John and the rest of the apostles, as Irenæus (who himself knew Polycarpus, and doubtless had it from his own mouth) speaks,[m] in a letter about this very thing, though himself was of the other side. And Poly-

[m] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 24.

crates,[n] in a letter to the same purpose, instances, not only in St. John, but St. Philip the Apostle, who himself and his whole family used so to keep it, from whom it had been conveyed down in a constant and uninterrupted observance through all the bishops of those places, some whereof he there enumerates; and tells us, that seven bishops of that place, in a constant succession, had been his kinsmen, and himself the eighth; and that it had never been kept by them upon any other day: this we are not so to understand, as if St. John and the apostles had instituted this festival, and commanded it to be kept upon that day, but rather that they did it by way of condescension, accommodating their practice in a matter indifferent to the humour of the Jewish converts, (whose number in those parts was very great,) as they had done before in several other cases, and particularly in observing the sabbath, or Saturday. The other churches, also, (says Eusebius,[o]) had for their patronage an apostolical tradition, or at least pretended it, and were the much more numerous party. This difference was the spring of great bustles in the church, for the bishops of Rome stickled hard to impose their customs upon the Eastern churches; whereupon Polycarpus comes over to Rome to confer with Anicetus,[p] who was then bishop, about it; and though they could not agree the matter, yet they parted fairly. After this, pope Victor renewed the quarrel, and was so fierce and peremptory in the case, that he either actually did, or (as a learned man inclines rather to think,[q] probably to mollify the odium of the fact) severely threatened to excommunicate those Eastern churches for standing out against it. This rash and bold attempt was ill resented by the sober and moderate men of his own party, who wrote to him about it; and particularly Irenæus, (a man, as Eusebius notes, truly answering his name, both in his temper and his life quiet and peaceable,) who gravely reproved him for rending the peace of the church, and troubling so many famous churches for observing the customs derived to them from their ancestors, with much more to the same purpose. But the Asian bishops, little regarding what was either said or done at Rome, still went on in their old course, though by the diligent practices of the other party they lost ground, but yet still made shift to keep the cause on foot till the time of Constantine;[r] who

[n] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 24. [o] Ibid. c. 23. [p] Id. l. iv. c. 14.
[q] H. Vales. Annot. in Euseb. l. v. c. 24. [r] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iii. c. 14. 17.

finding this controversy, amongst others, much to disquiet the peace of the church, did for this and some other reasons summon the great council of Nice, by whom this question was solemnly determined, Easter ordained to be kept upon one and the same day throughout the world, not according to the custom of the Jews, but upon the Lord's day; and this decree ratified and published by the imperial letters to all the churches.

The eve of vigils of this festival were wont to be celebrated with more than ordinary pomp, with solemn watchings, with multitudes of lighted torches, both in the churches and their own private houses, so as to turn the night itself into day,[s] and with the general resort and confluence of all ranks of men, both magistrates and people. This custom of lights at that time was, if not begun, at least much augmented by Constantine,[t] who set up lamps and torches in all places, as well within the churches as without; that through the whole city the night seemed to outvie the sun at noon-day. And this they did (as Nazianzen intimates[u]) as a *prodromus*, or forerunner of that great light, even the Sun of Righteousness, which the next day arose upon the world. For the feast itself, the same father[x] calls it "the holy and famous passover, a day which is the queen of days, the festival of festivals, and which as far excels all other, even of those which are instituted to the honour of Christ, as the sun goes beyond the other stars." A time it was famous for works of mercy and charity, every one, both of clergy and laity, striving to contribute liberally to the poor: a duty (as one of the ancients observes[y]) very congruous and suitable to that happy season; for what more fit, than that such as beg relief should be enabled to rejoice at that time, when we remember the common fountain of our mercies? Therefore, no sooner did the morning of this day appear, but Constantine used to arise,[z] and in imitation of the love and kindness of our blessed Saviour, to bestow the richest and most noble gifts, and to diffuse the influences of his bounty over all parts of his empire. And his example herein, it seems, was followed by most of his successors, who used upon this solemnity by their imperial orders to release

[s] Greg. Naz. Orat. ii. in Pasch. Orat. xlii. p. 676.
[t] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 22.
[u] Orat. xlii. p. 677.
[x] Ibid. et Orat. xix. p. 304.
[y] Commod. instruction. c. 75.
[z] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 22.

all prisoners, unless such as were there for more heavy and notorious crimes, high treason, murders, rapes, incest, and the like. And Chrysostom[a] tells us of a letter of Theodosius the Great, sent at this time throughout the empire, wherein he did not only command that all prisoners should be released and pardoned, but wished he was able to recall those that were already executed, and to restore them to life again. And because by the negligence and remissness of messengers, or any accident, those imperial letters might sometimes happen to come too late, therefore Valentinian the Younger provided by a standing law,[b] that whether order came or not, the judges should dispense the accustomed indulgence, and upon Easter-day in the morning cause all prisons to be open, the chains to be knocked off, and the persons set at liberty.

The next feast considerable in those primitive times, was that of Whitsunday, or Pentecost, a feast of great eminency amongst the Jews, in memory of the law delivered at Mount Sinai at that time, and for the gathering and bringing in of their harvest; and of no less note amongst Christians, for the Holy Ghost's descending upon the apostles and other Christians, in the visible appearance of "fiery cloven tongues," which happened upon that day, and those miraculous powers that were conferred upon them. It was observed with the same respect to Easter, that the Jews did with respect to their passover, viz. (as the word imports,) just fifty days after it, reckoning from the second day of that festival; it seems to some to have commenced from the first rise of Christianity, not only because the apostles and the church were assembled upon that day, but because St. Paul made so much haste to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost,[c] which they understand of his great desire to keep it there as a Christian feast. But the argument seems to me no way conclusive, for the apostle might desire to be there at that time, both because he was sure to meet with a great number of the brethren, and because he should have a fitter opportunity to preach the gospel to the Jews, who from all parts flocked thither to the feast, as our Saviour himself, for the same reason, used to go up to Jerusalem at all their great and solemn feasts. But however this was, it is certain the observation of it is ancient: it was

[a] Hom. xxi. ad pop. Antioch. s. 3. vol. ii. p. 217.

[b] Cod. Theodos. lib. ix. tit. xxxviii. de indulg. l. 8.

[c] Acts xx. 16.

mentioned by Irenæus, in a book which he wrote concerning Easter, as the author of the Questions and Responses in Justin Martyr tells us;[d] by Tertullian,[e] and after him by Origen,[f] more than once. This feast is by us styled Whitsunday, partly because of those vast diffusions of light and knowledge which upon this day were shed upon the apostles, in order to the enlightening of the world; but principally because this (as also Easter) being the stated time for baptism in the ancient church, those who were baptized put on white garments, in token of that pure and innocent course of life they had now engaged in, (of which more in its proper place.) This white garment they wore till the next Sunday after, and then laid it aside; whence the octave, or Sunday after Easter, came to be styled *Dominica in Albis*, "the Sunday in white," it being then that the new baptized put off their white garments. We may observe, that in the writers of those times, the whole space of fifty days between Easter and Whitsunday goes often under the name of Pentecost, and was in a manner accounted festival, as Tertullian informs us,[g] and the forty-third canon of the Illiberitan council seems to intimate. During this whole time, baptism was conferred; all fasts were suspended and counted unlawful; they prayed standing, as they did every Lord's day; and at this time read over the Acts of the Apostles, wherein their sufferings and miracles are recorded: as we learn from a law of the younger Theodosius,[h] wherein this custom is mentioned; and more plainly from St. Chrysostom,[i] who treats of it in an homily on purpose, where he gives this reason why that book, which contained those actions of the apostles, which were done after Pentecost, should yet be read before it, whenas at all other times those parts of the gospel were read which were proper to the season, because the apostles' miracles being the grand confirmation of the truth of Christ's resurrection, and those miracles recorded in that book, it was therefore most proper to be read next to the feast of the resurrection.

Epiphany succeeds: this word was of old promiscuously used either for the feast of Christ's nativity, or for that which we now

[d] Quest. 115. [e] Tertull. de Idol. c. 14. [f] Adv. Cels. l. viii. s. 22.

[g] De Idol. c. 14. de Bapt. c. 19. de Cor. Mil. c. 3. Vid. Max. Taurin. Homil. iii. de S. Pentec. p. 223.

[h] Cod. Theodos. lib. xv. tit. v. l. 5.

[i] Serm. cur. Act. Apost. legantur in Pentec. in princip. Act. vol. iii. p. 81. et seq.

properly call by that name. Afterwards the titles became distinct; that of Christ's birth (or, as we now term it, Christmas-day) was called γενέθλια, "the nativity," and Θεοφάνια, "the appearances of God in the flesh;" two names importing the same thing, as Nazianzen notes.[k] For the antiquity of it, the first footsteps I find of it are in the second century, though I doubt not but it might be celebrated before, mentioned by Theophilus, bishop of Cæsarea, about the time of the emperor Commodus. But if any credit might be given to the decretal epistles, it was somewhat elder than that; pope Telesphorus,[l] who lived under Antoninus Pius, ordaining divine service to be celebrated, and an angelical hymn to be sung the night before the nativity of our Saviour. However, that it was kept before the times of Constantine, we have this sad instance:[m] that when the persecution raged under Dioclesian, who then kept his court at Nicomedia, amongst other acts of barbarous cruelty done there, finding multitudes of Christians, young and old, met together in the temple, upon the day of Christ's nativity, to celebrate that festival, he commanded the church-doors to be shut up, and fire to be put to it, which in a short time reduced them and the church to ashes. I shall not dispute whether it was always observed upon the same day that we keep it now, the twenty-fifth of December; it seems probable, that for a long time in the East it was kept in January, under the name, and at the general time of the *Epiphania*, till receiving more light in the case from the churches of the West, they changed it to this day. Sure I am, St. Chrysostom,[n] in an homily on purpose, about this very thing, affirms, that it was not above ten years since in that church (i. e. Antioch) it began first to be observed upon that day, and there offers several reasons to prove that to be the true day of Christ's nativity.

The feast of Epiphany, properly so called, was kept on the sixth of January, and had that name from a threefold apparition or manifestation commemorated upon that day, which all happened, though not in the same year, yet upon the same day of the year. The first was the appearance of the star, which

[k] Orat. xxxviii. p. 613.

[l] Decret. Telesph. sect. Nocte vero.

[m] Niceph. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 6. Forsan ex Sim. Metaphrast. qui eadem habet in Martyr. Ind. et Domn. apud Sur. ad 26 Dec.

[n] Serm. in diem natalem Chr. s. 1, 2. vol. ii. p. 555, 556.

guided the wise men to Christ. The second was the famous appearance at the baptism of Christ, when all the persons in the holy Trinity did sensibly manifest themselves, the Father in the voice from heaven, the Son in the river Jordan, and the Holy Ghost in the visible shape of a dove. This was ever accounted a famous festival, and, as St. Chrysostom tells us,[o] was properly called Epiphany, because he came in a manner into the world *incognito;* but at his baptism openly appeared to be the Son of God, and was so declared before the world. At this time it was that by his "going into the river Jordan he did sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin," (as our church expresses it;) in memory whereof, Chrysostom tells us,[p] they used in this solemnity at midnight to draw water, which they looked upon as consecrated this day, and carrying it home to lay it up, where it would remain pure and uncorrupt for a whole year, sometimes two or three years together; the truth whereof must rest upon the credit of that good man. The third manifestation commemorated at this time was that of Christ's divinity, which appeared in the first miracle that he wrought in turning water into wine; therefore it was called *Bethphania*, because it was done in the house of that famous marriage in Cana of Galilee, which our Saviour honoured with his own presence. All these three appearances contributed to the solemnity of this festival.

But beside these, there was another sort of festivals in the primitive church, kept in commemoration of martyrs: for the understanding of which, we are to know, that in those sad and bloody times, when the Christian religion triumphed over persecution, and gained upon the world by nothing more than the constant and resolute sufferings of its professors, whom no threatenings or torments could baffle out of it, the people generally had a vast reverence for those who suffered thus deep in the cause of Christianity, and laid down their lives for the confirmation of it. They looked upon confessors and martyrs as the great champions of their religion, who resisted unto blood, and died upon the spot, to make good its ground, and to maintain its honour and reputation; and therefore thought it very reasonable to do all possible honour to their memories, partly that others might be encouraged to the like patience and fortitude, and partly that virtue, even in this world, might not lose its reward. Hence they were wont

[o] Hom. de Bapt. Christ. s. 2. vol. ii. p. 369. [p] Ibid.

once a year to meet at the graves of martyrs, there solemnly to recite their sufferings and their triumphs, to praise their virtues, and to bless God for their pious examples, for their holy lives, and their happy deaths, for their palms and crowns. These anniversary solemnities were called *memoriæ martyrum*, "the memories of the martyrs," a title mentioned by Cyprian,[q] but certainly much older than his time; and, indeed, when they were first taken up in the church, is, I think, not so exactly known. The first that I remember to have met with is that of Polycarp, (whose martyrdom is placed by Eusebius anno 168,[r] under the third persecution,) concerning whose death and sufferings the church of Smyrna, (of which he was bishop,) giving an account to the church of Philomelium,[s] and especially of the place where they had honourably entombed his bones, they do profess, that (so far as the malice of their enemies would permit them, and they prayed God nothing might hinder it) they would assemble in that place, and celebrate the birth-day of his martyrdom with joy and gladness: where we may especially observe, that this solemnity is styled his birth-day; and, indeed, so the primitive Christians used to call the days of their death and passion, (quite contrary to the manner of the Gentiles, who kept the natalitials of their famous men,) looking upon these as the true days of their nativity, wherein they were freed from this valley of tears, these regions of death, and born again unto the joys and happiness of an endless life. The same account Origen gives,[t] (if that book be his, a very ancient author however:) "we keep (says he) the memories of the saints, of our ancestors and friends that die in the faith, both rejoicing in that rest which they have obtained, and begging for ourselves a pious consummation in the faith: and we celebrate not the day of their nativity, as being the inlet to sorrow and temptation, but of their death, as the period of their miseries, and that which sets them beyond the reach of temptations. And this we do, both clergy and people meeting together, inviting the poor and needy, and refreshing the widows and the orphans, that so our festival may be, both in respect of them whom we commemorate, the memorial of that happy rest which their departed souls do enjoy, and, in respect of us, the odour of a sweet smell in the sight of God."

[q] Epist. xii. ad presb. et diac. p. 28.
[r] Euseb. Chron. ad Ann. 168.
[s] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 15.
[t] Expos. in Joh. l. iii. vol. ii. p. 902.

Under Constantine,[u] these days were commanded to be observed with great care and strictness, enjoining all his lieutenants and governors of provinces to see the memorials of the martyrs duly honoured; and so sacred were they accounted in those days, that it was thought a piece of profaneness to be absent from them; therefore St. Basil[x] thought he could not use a more solemn argument to persuade a certain bishop to come over to him upon this occasion, than to adjure him, by the respect he bore to the memories of the martyrs, that if he would not do it for his, yet he should for their sakes, towards whom it was unfit he should shew the least disregard. Hence it is that Libanius[y] sometimes takes notice of the Christians under no other character than this, "enemies to the gods, τοὺς περὶ τοῦς τάφους, that haunt and frequent tombs and sepulchres." For the time of these assemblies, it was commonly once a year, viz. upon the day of their martyrdom, for which end they took particular care to keep registers of the days of the martyrs' passions. So Cyprian[z] expressly charges his clergy to note down the days of their decease, that there might be a commemoration of them amongst the memories of the martyrs. Theodoret tells us,[a] that in his time they did not thus assemble once, or twice, or five times in a year, but kept frequent memorials, oftentimes every day celebrating the memorials of martyrs with hymns and praises unto God. But, I suppose, he means it of days appointed to the memory of particular martyrs, which being then very numerous, their memorials were distinctly fixed upon their proper days, the festival of St. Peter, or St. Paul, Thomas, Sergius, Marcellus, &c. as he there enumerates them. For the places, these solemnities were kept at first at the tombs where the martyrs had been buried, which usually were in the *cœmeteria*, or churchyard, distinct in those times from their places of public worship, and at a great distance from them, as being commonly without the cities. Here their burying places were in large *cryptæ*, or grots, under ground, where they celebrated these memorials, and whither they used to retire for their common devotions in times of great persecution, when their churches were destroyed or taken from them: and therefore, when Emilian, the governor of Egypt under the reign of

[u] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 23.
[x] Epist. cclxxxii. ad Episc.
[y] Apologet. pro doctr. sua, p. 592.
[z] Epist. xii. ad presb. et diac. p. 27.
[a] De Cur. Græc. affect. Serm. viii. de martyr. p. 121.

Valerian, would screw up the persecution against Christians, he forbade their meetings, and that they should not so much as assemble in the places which they called their churchyards;[b] the same privilege which Maximinius also had taken from them. By reason of the darkness of these places, and their frequent assembling there in the night, to avoid the fury of their enemies, they were forced to use lights and lamps in their public meetings; but they who make this an argument to patronise their burning of lamps and wax candles in their churches at noon-day, (as it is in all the great churches of the Roman communion,) talk at a strange rate of wild inconsequence. I am sure St. Jerome,[c] when charged with it, denied that they used any in the day time, and never but at night, when they rose up to their night devotions: he confesses, indeed, it was otherwise in the Eastern churches, where, when the gospel was to be read, they set up lights, as a token of their rejoicing for those happy and glad tidings that were contained in it, light having been ever used as a symbol and representation of joy and gladness; a custom, probably, not much older than his time. Afterwards, when Christianity prevailed in the world, the devotion of Christians erected churches in those places: the temples of the martyrs (says Theodoret[d]) being spacious and beautiful, richly and curiously adorned, and shining with great lustre and brightness. These solemnities, as the same authors inform us, were kept, not like the heathen festivals, with luxury and obsceneness, but with devotion and sobriety, with divine hymns and religious sermons, with fervent prayers to God, mixed many times with sighs and tears.[e] Here they heard sermons and orations, joined in public prayers and praises,[f] received the holy sacrament, offered gifts and charities for the poor, recited the names of the martyrs then commemorated, with their due eulogies and commendations, and their virtues propounded to the imitation of the hearers: for which purpose they had their set notaries, who took the acts, sayings, and sufferings of martyrs, which were after compiled into particular treatises, and were recited in these annual meetings; and this was the first original of martyrologies in the Christian church. From this custom of offering up prayers,

[b] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 11; l. ix. c. 2.
[c] Adv. Vigilant. vol. ii. p. 123.
[d] De cur. Græc. affect. Serm. viii. de martyr. p. 121.
[e] Vid. Constit. Apost. l. viii. c. 45.
[f] Vid. Epiph. Expos. fid. cathol. c. 22.

praises, and alms at those times, it is that the fathers speak so often of oblations and sacrifices at the martyrs' festivals. Tertullian, often:[g] "upon an anniversary day (says he) we make oblations for them that are departed, in memory of the *natalitia*, or birthdays;" and to the same purpose elsewhere. "As oft (says Cyprian[h]) as by an anniversary commemoration we celebrate the passion days of the martyrs, we always offer sacrifices for them;" and the same phrases oft occur in many others of the fathers: by which it is evident, they meant no more than their public prayers, and offering up praises to God for the piety and constancy, and the excellent examples of their martyrs; their celebrating the eucharist at these times, as the commemoration of Christ's sacrifice; their oblation of alms and charity for the poor; every one of which truly may, and often is styled a sacrifice or oblation, and are so understood by some of the more moderate, even of the Romish church;[i] and with good reason, for that they did not make any real and formal sacrifices and oblations to martyrs, but only honour them as holy men, and friends to God, who, for his and our Saviour's honour and the truth of religion, chose to lay down their lives, I find expressly affirmed by Theodoret.[k]

These festivals, being times of mirth and gladness, were celebrated with great expressions of love and charity to the poor, and mutual rejoicings with one another. Here they had their *συμπόσια*, or "feasts," every one bringing something to the common banquet, out of which the poor also had their share. These feasts at first were very sober and temperate, and such as became the modesty and simplicity of Christians, as we heard before out of Theodoret, and is affirmed before him by Constantine, in his oration to the saints. But degenerating afterwards into excess and intemperance, they were every where declaimed against by the fathers, till they were wholly laid aside. Upon the account of these feasts, and for the better making provisions for them, we may conceive it was that markets came to be kept at these times and places, for of such St. Basil speaks,[l] *ἀγοραςίαι*

[g] De Cor. mil. c. 3. De exhort. Castit. De monog.

[h] Epist. xxxix. presb. et diac. p. 77. Ep. xii. p. 27.

[i] Rigalt. Obs. ad Cypr. H. Vales. annot. ad Euseb. Hist. annot. p. 262. Pichael. de missa. p. 103. 107.

[k] De cur Grace. affect. Serm. viii. de martyr. p. 116.

[l] Reg. fus. disput. interrog. 40.

ἐν τοῖς μαρτυρίοις γινομέναι, "markets held at the memorials and tombs of martyrs:" these he condemns as highly unsuitable to those solemnities which were only instituted for prayer, and a commemoration of the virtues of good men, for our encouragement and imitation; and that they ought to remember the severity of our otherwise meek and humble Saviour, who whipped the buyers and sellers out of the temple, when, by their marketings, they had turned "the house of prayer into a den of thieves." And the truth is, these anniversary commemorations, though in their primitive institution they are highly reasonable and commendable; yet, through the folly and dotage of men, they were after made to minister to great superstition and idolatry: so plain is it, that the best and usefullest things may be corrupted to bad purposes. For hence sprung the doctrine and practice of prayer and invocation of saints, and their intercession with God, their worshipping of relics, pilgrimages, and visiting churches, and offering at the shrines of such and such saints, and such like superstitious practices, which in after-ages overrun so great a part of the Christian church; things utterly unknown to the simplicity of those purer and better times.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE PERSONS CONSTITUTING THE BODY OF THE CHURCH, BOTH PEOPLE AND MINISTERS.

The people distinguished into several ranks. Catechumens of two sorts. Gradually instructed in the principles of the Christian faith. Accounted only Christians at large. The more recondite mysteries of Christianity concealed from persons till after baptism. Three reasons assigned of it. How long they remained in the state of catechumens. The several classes of penitents, the προσκλαίοντες, ἀκροώμενοι, ὑποπίπτοντες, συνιστάμενοι, the πιστοί, or the "faithful." Their particular stations in the church. Their great reverence for the Lord's supper. The clergy, why called κλῆρος. Of two sorts: the highest, bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Bishops, as superior to presbyters, how ancient, by the most learned opposers of episcopacy. Their office and privilege, what. *Chorepiscopi*, who; their power and privilege above presbyters. The περιοδευταί, or "visitors," in every diocese. Of metropolitans, what their power and authority above ordinary bishops: their antiquity. Of patriarchs, and in what respects superior to metropolitans and archbishops. An account of conforming the external jurisdiction of the church to the civil government of the Roman empire. Presbyters, their place and duty. Whether they preached in the presence of the bishop. Deacons,

their institution, office, number. The archdeacon. Of inferior orders. The subdeacon. The *acolythus*. The exorcist. The reader. The door-keeper. What the nature of their several places. Ordination to these offices, how managed. The people present at, and consenting to the ordination. *Sacerdotes prædicari*, what. The Christian discipline in this case imitated by the emperor Severus, in appointing civil officers. Great trials and testimonials to be had of persons to be ordained. Clergymen to rise by degrees. The age usually required in those that were to be promoted to the several orders. Of deaconesses, their antiquity, age, and office. The great honour and respect shewed to bishops and ministers. Looked upon as common parents. Nothing of moment done without their leave. Their welcome, and the honour done them wherever they came. This made good by several instances. Bishops invested with power to determine civil controversies. The plentiful provision made for them. The great privileges and immunities granted by Constantine and his successors, to the bishops and clergy, noted out of the Theodosian Code.

From the consideration of time and place, we proceed to consider the persons that constituted and made up their religious assemblies; and they were either the body of the people, or those who were peculiarly consecrated and set apart for the public ministrations of religion. For the body of the people, we may observe, that as Christianity at first generally gained admission in great towns and cities, so all the believers of that place usually assembled and met together: the Christians also of the neighbour villages resorting thither at times of public worship. But religion increasing apace, the public assembly, especially in the greater cities, quickly began to be too vast and numerous to be managed with any order and conveniency, and therefore they were forced to divide the body into particular congregations, who had their pastors and spiritual guides set over them, but still were under the superintendency and care of him that was their president, or bishop of the place. And according as the church could form and establish its discipline, the people, either according to their seniority and improvement, or according to the quality of the present condition they were under, began to be distinguished into several ranks and classes, which had their distinct places in the church, and their gradual admission to the several parts of the public worship.[a] The first were the catechumens, and of these there were two sorts: the τελεώτεροι, or "more perfect," such as had been catechumens of some considerable standing, and were even ripe for baptism; these might stay not only the reading of the scriptures, but to the very last part of the first service. The others were the

[m] Balsam. Zonar. Aristen. in Can. 5. Conc. Neocæsar.

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ἀτελέστεροι, "the more rude and imperfect," who stood only amongst the hearers, and were to depart the congregation as soon as the lessons were read: these were as yet accounted heathens, who applied themselves to the Christian faith, and were catechised and instructed in the more plain grounds and rudiments of religion. These principles were gradually delivered to them, according as they became capable to receive them; first the more plain, and then the more difficult. Indeed, they were very shy of imparting the knowledge of the more recondite doctrines of Christianity to any till after baptism. So St. Cyril[n] expressly assures us, where speaking to the *illuminate*, or baptized: "if, during the catechetical exercise, (says he,) a catechumen shall ask thee, what that means which the preachers say? tell him not, for he is yet without; and these mysteries are delivered to thee only. The weak understanding of a catechumen being no more able to bear such sublime mysteries, than a sick man's head can large and immoderate draughts of wine." And at the end of his preface he has this note:[o] "these catechetical discourses may be read by those that are to be baptized, or the faithful already baptized: but to catechumens, or such as are no Christians, thou mayest not impart them; for if thou dost, expect to give an account to God."

St. Basil,[p] discoursing of the rites and institutions of Christianity, divides them into two parts: the τὰ κηρύγματα, and the τὰ δόγματα. The τὰ κηρύγματα were those parts of religion which might, δημοσίευεσθαι, be familiarly preached and expounded to the people: the τὰ δόγματα were the more sublime and hidden doctrines and parts of the Christian faith; and these were ἀπόῤῥητα, things not rashly and commonly to be divulged, but to be locked up in silence.[q] Of this nature were the doctrines of the Trinity and hypostatic union, and such like; especially of the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper. For though they acquainted their young hearers with so much of them as was necessary to stir up their desires, yet as to the main of the things themselves, the sacramental symbols, the manner of their celebration, the *modus* of the divine presence at the holy eucharist, the meaning of all those mystical rites and ceremonies that were used about them, these were carefully con-

[n] Præf. ad Catech. Illum.

[o] Ibid.

[p] De Spir. Sanct. c. 27.

[q] Vid. Dion. Areop. de Eccl. Hierarch. c. 1.

cealed both from strangers and catechumens, and communicated only to those who were solemnly initiated and baptized. Hence that ancient form so common in sermons and writings of the fathers, whereby, when accidentally discoursing before the people of any of these mysterious parts of religion, they used to fetch themselves off with an ἴσασιν οἱ μεμυήμενοι, "those that are initiated know what is said."[r] This was so usual, that this phrase occurs at least fifty times in the writings of St. Chrysostom only, as Casaubon hath observed:[s] who has likewise noted three reasons out of the fathers, why they so studiously concealed these parts of their religion. First, the nature of the things themselves, so sublime and remote from vulgar apprehensions, that they would signify little to pagans, or catechumens not yet fully instructed and confirmed in the faith, and would either be lost upon them, or in danger to be derided by them. Secondly, that hereby the catechumens and younger Christians might be inflamed with a greater eagerness of desire to partake of the mysteries and privileges of the faithful; human nature being desirous of nothing more than the knowledge of what is kept and concealed from us. To help them forward in this, St. Augustine tells us,[t] that, in their public prayers, they were wont to beg of God to inspire the catechumens with a desire of baptismal regeneration. The same account Chrysostom gives us,[u] this being part of the form used in their public service: "Let us pray that the most gracious and merciful God would hear the prayers of the catechumens;" and what it was they prayed for he presently adds, viz. "that they might no longer remain in that state." Upon these accounts, initiation by baptism, but especially admission to the Lord's supper, is, amongst other titles in the writers of those times, called *desiderata*, because so earnestly desired and sought for by those that were not yet taken in. The truth is, till persons arrived at this state they were not accounted Christians,[x] (or, but in a large sense, as candidates that stood in order to it;) and therefore could not satisfy themselves either to live or die in that condition, wherein they wanted the great seals and pledges of their Christianity. Thirdly, to beget

[r] Chrys. Hom. lxvii. in Gen. s. 8. vol. iv. p. 638. et alibi sæpiss. Isid. Pelus. l. iv. ep. 162. aliique.

[s] Exercit. 16. ad Annal. Bar. S. 43. p. 556.

[t] Ad Vital. ep. 107.

[u] Hom. ii. in 2 ad Cor. c. i. s. 8. vol. x. p. 440.

[x] Vid. Chrysost. ibid.

in men's minds the higher esteem and veneration for these religious mysteries, nothing producing a greater contempt even in sacred things, than too much openness and familiarity. So that a little obscurity and concealment might seem necessary to vindicate them from contempt, and secure the majesty and reverence that was due to them. This made the fathers and seniors of the church, (says St. Basil,[y]) in prescribing rites and laws, leave many things in the dark, behind the veil and curtain, that they might τὸ σεμνὸν τοῖς μυστηρίοις φυλάττειν, "preserve the sacredness and dignity that was due to the mysteries of religion. For a thing (says he) cannot properly be said to be a mystery when it is once exposed to every vulgar and common ear. But of this enough, if not too much.

And as they were careful to keep the higher parts of Christianity within the cognizance of the faithful, so they were not less careful to teach and instruct the catechumens in all those principles they were capable of being taught. This, at their first coming over, was done privately and at home, by persons deputed on purpose to that office by the bishop, (as Balsamon clearly intimates,[z]) till they were sufficiently instructed in the first and more intelligible principles of the faith. Then they were admitted into the congregation, and suffered to be present at some parts of the divine service, especially the sermons, which were made for the building them up unto higher measures of knowledge; which being ended, they were commanded to depart the church, not being suffered to be present at the more solemn rites, especially the celebration of the Lord's supper. And in this manner they were trained up, till they were initiated by baptism, and taken into the highest form of Christians. How long persons remained in the state of the catechumens is difficult to determine, it not being always nor in all places alike, but longer in some, and shorter in others, and probably according to the capacity of the persons. The Apostolic Constitutions[a] appoint three years for the catechumen to be instructed; but provide withal, that if any one be diligent and virtuous, and have a ripeness of understanding for the thing, he may be admitted into baptism sooner: for (say they) not the space of time, but the fitness and manners of men, are to be regarded in this matter.

The next sort were the penitents, such as for some misde-

[y] De Spir. Sanct. c. 27. [z] In Can. 26. Conc. Laod. [a] Lib. viii. c. 32.

meanors were under the censures and severity of the church, and were gradually to obtain absolution from it. Of these there were several degrees, five especially mentioned by St. Gregory[b] of Neocæsarea, who lived about the year 250. The first were the *οἱ προσκλαίοντες*, "such as wept and lamented," and were rather candidates to be received into the orders of penitents, than penitents properly so called. These usually stood in a squalid and mournful habit at the church porch, with tears and great importunity begging of the faithful, as they went in, to pray for them. The second were the *ἀκροώμενοι*, the "hearers," who were admitted to hear the holy scriptures read and expounded to the people. Their station was at the upper end of the *narthex*, or first part of the church, and were to depart the congregation at the same time with the catechumens. The third class of penitents was that of the *ὑποπίπτοντες*, the "prostrate;" because, service being ended, they fell down before the bishop,[c] who, together with the congregation, falling down and making confession in their behalf, after raised them up, and laid his hands upon them. These stood within the body of the church next the pulpit, or reading pew, and were to depart together with the catechumens. The fourth were the *συνιστάμενοι*, the *consistentes*, such as stayed with the rest of the congregation, and did not depart with the catechumens, but, after they and the other penitents were gone out, stayed and joined in prayer and singing (but not in receiving the sacrament) with the faithful. These, after some time, were advanced into the fifth and last order of the *communicantes*, (*μέθεξιν τῶν ἁγιασμάτων*, St. Gregory calls it,) and were admitted to the partieipation of the holy sacrament. This was the state of the penitents in the primitive church. Persons having fully passed through the state of the catechumenate, became then immediate candidates of baptism, presented their names to the bishop, and, humbly prostrating themselves, begged that they might be entered into the church. These were called *competentes*, because they did *competere gratiam Christi*, sue for the grace of Christ conferred in baptism. The last rank was that of the *πιστοὶ*, or the "faithful," who having been baptized and confirmed, and having approved themselves by the long train and course of a strict pious life, were then admitted to the participation of the Lord's

[b] Epist. Canon. *περὶ τῶν εἰδωλόθ. φαγ.* Can. 11. [c] Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 16.

supper; which being the highest and most venerable mystery of the Christian religion, was not then rashly given to any, but to such only as had run through all other degrees, and by a course of piety evidenced themselves to be such real and faithful Christians, as that the highest mysteries and most solemn parts of religion might be committed to them. This was the highest order, and looked upon with great regard; and for any of this rank to lapse and be overtaken with a fault, cost them severer penances than were imposed upon the inferior forms of Christians.

This, in short, was the state of the people. But because it is not possible any body or community of men should be regularly managed without some particular persons to superintend, direct, and govern the affairs of the whole society, therefore we are next to inquire, what persons there were in the primitive church that were peculiarly set apart to steer its affairs, and to attend upon the public offices and ministrations of it. That God always had a peculiar people, whom he selected for himself out of the rest of mankind, is too evident to need any proof. Such were the patriarchs and the holy seed of old; such the Jews, chosen by him above all other nations in the world. This was his κλῆρος, his particular lot and portion, comprehending the body of the people in general. But afterwards this title was confined to narrower bounds, and became appropriate to that tribe which God had made choice of to stand before him, to wait at his altar, and to minister in the services of his worship: and after the expiration of their economy, was accordingly used to denote the ministry of the gospel, the persons peculiarly consecrated and devoted to the service of God in the Christian church; the clergy being those, *qui divino cultui ministeria religionis impendunt*, (as they are defined in a law of the emperor Constantine,[d]) who are set apart for the ministries of religion in matters relating to the divine worship. Now the whole κατάλογος ἱερατικὸς, (as it is often called in the apostles' canons,) the roll of the clergy of the ancient church, (taking it within the compass of its first four hundred years,) consisting of two sorts of persons, the ἱερουμένοι, who were peculiarly consecrated to the more proper and immediate acts of the worship of God; and the ὑπηρέται, such as were set apart only for the more mean and common services

[d] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. iii. de Epist. Eccl. et Cler. l. 2.

of the church: of the first sort were these three; bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

The first and principal officer of the church was the president, or bishop, usually chosen out of the presbyters. I shall not here concern myself in the disputes, whether episcopacy, as a superior order to presbytery, was of divine institution, (a controversy sufficiently ventilated in the late times,) it being enough to my purpose, what is acknowledged both by Blondel and Salmasius, the most learned defenders of presbytery, that bishops were distinct from and superior to presbyters in the second century, or the next age to the apostles. The main work and office of a bishop was to teach and instruct the people, to administer the sacraments, to absolve penitents, to eject and excommunicate obstinate and incorrigible offenders, to preside in the assemblies of the clergy, to ordain inferior officers in the church, to call them to account, and to suspend or deal with them according to the nature of the offence, to urge the observance of ecclesiastical laws, and to appoint and institute such indifferent rites as were for the decent and orderly administration of his church. In short, according to the notation of his name, he was a σκοπὸς, "a watchman and sentinel," and therefore obliged, ἐπισκοπεῖν, diligently and carefully to inspect and observe, to superintend and provide for those that were under his charge. This, Zonaras tells us,[e] was implied in the bishop's throne being placed on high in the most eminent part of the church, to denote how much it was his duty from thence to overlook, and very diligently to observe the people that were under him. These and many more were the unquestionable rights and duties of the episcopal office; which because it was very difficult and troublesome for one man to discharge, especially where the παροικία, or "diocese," (as we now call it,) was any thing large, therefore, upon the multiplying of country churches, it was thought fit to take in a subordinate sort of bishops, called *chorepiscopi*, country, or (as amongst us they have been called) suffragan bishops, whose business it was to superintend and inspect the churches in the country, that lay more remote from the city where the episcopal see was, and which the bishop could not always inspect and oversee in his own person. These were the *vicarii episcoporum*, (as they are called in Isidore's version of the thirteenth canon both of the

[e] In Can. Apost. can. 58.

Ancyran and Neocæsarean council,) the bishop's deputies, chosen out of the fittest and gravest persons. In the canon of the last-mentioned council, they are said to be chosen in imitation of the Seventy, not the seventy elders which Moses took in to bear part of the government, (as some have glossed the words of that canon,) but of the seventy disciples whom our Lord made choice of, to send up and down the countries to preach the gospel, as both Zonaras and Balsamon understand it: and therefore, by reason of their great care and pains, are commanded to be esteemed very honourable. Their authority was much greater than that of the presbyters, and yet much inferior to the bishop.[f] Bishops really they were, though their power confined within narrow limits; they were not allowed to ordain either presbyters or deacons, (unless peculiarly licensed to it by the bishop of the diocese,) though they might ordain subdeacons, readers, and any inferior officers under them; they were to be assistant to the bishop, might be present at synods and councils, (to many whereof we find their subscriptions,) and had power to give letters of peace,[g] i. e. such letters whereby the bishop of one diocese was wont to recommend any of his clergy to the bishop of another, that so a fair understanding and correspondence might be maintained between them; a privilege expressly denied to any presbyter whatsoever. But lest this wandering employment of the *chorepiscopi* should reflect any dishonour upon the episcopal office, there were certain presbyters appointed in their room, called *περιοδευταὶ*, or "visitors," often mentioned in the ancient canons and acts of the councils,[h] who, being tied to no certain place, were to go up and down the country, to observe and correct what was amiss: and these doubtless were those *ἐπιχώριοι πρεσβύτεροι*, (spoken of in the thirteenth canon of the Neocæsarean council,) those "rural presbyters," who are there forbid to consecrate the eucharist in the city church, in the presence of the bishop or the presbyters of the city.

As Christianity increased and overspread all parts, and especially the cities of the empire, it was found necessary yet farther to enlarge the episcopal office; and as there was commonly a bishop in every great city, so in the metropolis, (as the Romans called it,) the mother city of every province, (wherein they had courts of civil judicature,) there was an archbishop, or

[f] Conc. Antioch. Can. 10. [g] Ibid. Can. 8. [h] Conc. Laod. Can. 57.

a metropolitan, who had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over all the churches within that province. He was superior to all the bishops within those limits: to him it belonged either to ordain or to ratify the elections and ordinations of all the bishops within his province, insomuch that without his confirmation they were looked upon as null and void. Once, at least, every year he was to summon the bishops under him to a synod, to inquire into and direct the ecclesiastical affairs within that province; to inspect the lives and manners, the opinions and principles of his bishops, to admonish, reprove, and suspend them that were disorderly and irregular; if any controversies or contentions happened between any of them, he was to have the hearing and determination of them; and, indeed, no matter of moment was done within the whole province, without first consulting him in the case. Besides this metropolitan, there was many times another in the same province, who enjoyed nothing but that name and title, his episcopal see being, by the emperor's pragmatic, erected into the dignity of a metropolis. He was only an honorary metropolitan, without any real power and jurisdiction, and had no other privilege but that he took place above other ordinary bishops, in all things else equally subject with them to the metropolitan of the province, as the council of Chalcedon determines in this case.[i] When this office of metropolitan first began, I find not, only this we are sure of, that the council of Nice, settling the just rights and privileges of metropolitan bishops, speaks of them as a thing of ancient date, ushering in the canon[k] with an *ἀρχαῖα ἔθη κρατείτω*, "let ancient custom still take place." The original of the institution seems to have been partly to comply with people's occasions, who oft resorted to the metropolis for despatch of their affairs, and so might fitly discharge their civil and ecclesiastical concerns both at once; and partly because of the great confluence of people to that city, that the bishop of it might have preeminence above the rest, and the honour of the church bear some proportion to that of the state.[l]

After this sprang up another branch of the episcopal office, as much superior to that of metropolitans, as theirs was to ordinary bishops; these were called primates and patriarchs, and had jurisdiction over many provinces. For the understanding of

[i] Can. 12 [k] Can. 6. [l] Vid. Conc. Antioch. Can. 9.

this, it is necessary to know, that when Christianity came to be fully settled in the world, they contrived to model the external government of the church as near as might be to the civil government of the Roman empire; the parallel most exactly drawn by an ingenious person of our own nation;[m] the sum of it is this: the whole empire of Rome was divided into thirteen dioceses, (so they called those divisions;) these contained about one hundred and twenty provinces, and every province several cities. Now as in every city there was a temporal magistrate, for the executing of justice, and keeping the peace both for that city and the towns round about it, so was there also a bishop for spiritual order and government, whose jurisdiction was of like extent and latitude. In every province there was a proconsul or president, whose seat was usually at the metropolis, or chief city of the province; and hither all inferior cities came for judgment in matters of importance: and in proportion to this, there was in the same city an archbishop, or metropolitan, for matters of ecclesiastical concernment. Lastly, in every diocese, the emperors had their *vicarii*, or lieutenants, who dwelt in the principal city of the diocese, where all imperial edicts were published, and from whence they were sent abroad into the several provinces, and where was the chief tribunal, where all causes not determinable elsewhere were decided; and to answer this, there was in the same city a primate, to whom the last determination of all appeals from all the provinces in differences of the clergy, and the sovereign care of all the diocese for sundry points of spiritual government, did belong. This, in short, is the sum of the account which that learned man gives of this matter. So that the patriarch, as superior to the metropolitans, was to have under his jurisdiction not any one single province, but a whole diocese, (in the old Roman notion of that word,) consisting of many provinces. To him belonged the ordination of all the metropolitans that were under him, as also the summoning them to councils, the correcting and reforming the misdemeanors they were guilty of; and from his judgment and sentence of things properly within his cognizance there lay no appeal. To this I shall only add what Salmasius has noted;[n] that as the diocese that was governed by the *vicarius* had many provinces under it,

[m] Edward Breerwood's Patriarch. Governm. of the Ancient Church, quest. 1.

[n] De Primat. c. 12.

so the *præfectus prætorio* had several dioceses under him: and in proportion to this probably it was, that patriarchs were first brought in, who if not superior to primates in jurisdiction and power, were yet in honour, by reason of the dignity of those cities where their sees were fixed, as at Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem; a title and dignity which they retain to this day.

The next office to bishops was that of presbyters, to whom it belonged to preach to the people, to administer baptism, consecrate the eucharist, and to be assistant to the bishop, both in public ministrations, and in despatching the affairs of the church. The truth is, the presbyters of every great city were a kind of ecclesiastical senate, under the care and presidency of the bishop, whose counsel and assistance he made use of in ruling those societies of Christians that were under his charge and government, and were accordingly reckoned next in place and power to him: thus described by St. Gregory in his Iambics:[o]

οἱ τὰ δεύτερα
Θρόνων λελογχότες,
Λαοῦ προέδροι πρεσβύται,
Σεμνὴ γερουσία.

"The venerable senate of presbyters, that preside over the people, and possess the second throne;" i. e. the place next to the bishop. They are called *clerici superioris loci*,[p] and otherwhiles (unless we understand it of the *chorepiscopi*) *antistites in secundo ordine;* and accordingly in churches had seats of eminency placed for them next to the bishop's throne: whereby was implied, (says Zonaras,[q]) that they ought to use a proportionable care and providence towards the people, to inform and teach them, to direct and guide them; being appointed as fellow-labourers with, and assistants to the bishop. But though presbyters, by their ordination, had a power conferred upon them to administer holy things, yet after that the church was settled upon foundations of order and regularity, they did not usually exercise this power within any diocese without leave and authority from the bishop, much less take upon them to preach in his presence. This custom (however it might be otherwise in the Eastern church) we are sure was con-

[o] Greg. Naz. Carm. xxiii. Εἰς ἑαυτὸν, vol. ii. p. 244.

[p] Cod. Theodos. lib. x. tit. xxxix. de fid. test. l. 11. Sidon. Apol. l. iv. epist. 11.

[q] In Can. 58. Apost.

stantly observed in the churches of Africa till the time of Valerius,[r] St. Augustine's predecessor in the see of Hippo: who being a Greek, and, by reason of his little skill in the Latin tongue, unable to preach to the edification of the people, admitted St. Augustine (whom he had lately ordained presbyter) to preach before him: which though at first it was ill resented by some bishops in those parts, yet quickly became a precedent for other churches to follow after.

After these came deacons: what the duty of their place was, appears from their primitive election,[s] the apostles setting them apart to serve or minister to the tables, i. e. to attend upon and take charge of those daily provisions that were made for poor indigent Christians; but certainly it implies also their being destinated to a peculiar attendance at the service of the Lord's table. And both these may be very well meant in that place, it being the custom of Christians then to meet every day at the Lord's table, where they made their offerings for the poor, and when poor and rich had their meals together. And hence it was ever accounted part of the deacon's office, as to take care of the poor, and to distribute the monies given for their relief and maintenance, so to wait upon the celebration of the eucharist; which being consecrated by the bishop or presbyter, the deacon delivered the sacramental elements to the people. Besides this, they were wont also to preach and to baptize, and were employed in many parts of the public service, especially in guiding and directing of the people. The number of them in any one place was usually restrained to seven, this being the number originally instituted by the apostle, and which might not be altered, although the city was never so great and numerous, as it is in the last canon of the Neocæsarean council. As the presbyters were to the bishop, so the deacons were to the presbyters; to be assistant to them, and to give them all due respect and reverence. And, therefore, when some of them began to take too much upon them, to distribute the sacrament before the bishop or presbyter, and to take place amongst the presbyters, the council of Nice took notice of it as a piece of bold and saucy usurpation,[t] severely commanded them to know their place, and to contain themselves within their own bounds and measures; and neither to meddle with the sacrament but in their order, nor

[r] Possid. in vit. August. c. 5. [s] Acts vi. [t] Can. 18.

to sit down before the presbyters, unless it be by their leave and command, as it is expressed by the Laodicean synod:[u] accordingly, too, the first council of Arles forbids the deacons to do any thing of themselves,[x] but to reserve the honour to the presbyters. Out of the body of these deacons there was usually one chosen to overlook the rest, the archdeacon; an office supposed to have been of good antiquity in the church, and of great authority, especially in after-times, being generally styled the eye of the bishop, to inspect all parts and places of his diocese. This was he that in the church of Rome was called the cardinal deacon, who (as Onuphrius tells us[y]) was at first but one, though the number increased afterwards. While churches were little, and the services not many, the deacons themselves were able to discharge them; but as these increased, so did their labours, and therefore it was thought fit to take in some inferior officers under them. This gave being to

Subdeacons, who were to be assistant to the deacon, as the deacon to the presbyter, and he to the bishop.[z] One great part of his work was, to wait at the church doors in the time of public worship, to usher in and to bring out the several orders of the catechumens and penitents, that none might mistake their proper stations, and that no confusion or disorder might arise to the disturbance of the congregation. When he was first taken in, I cannot find; but he is mentioned in an epistle of the Roman clergy to them of Carthage about St. Cyprian's retirement,[a] and elsewhere very often in Cyprian's epistles;[b] where he also speaks of the *acolythus:* what his proper business was, is not so certain; by some his office is said to have been this, to follow (as the word implies) or to go along with the bishop in the quality of an honourable attendant, to be ready at hand to minister to him, and to be a companion and witness of his honest and unblameable conversation, in case any evil fame should arise that might endeavour to blast his reputation. But by others he is said to have been a taper-bearer, to carry the lights which were set up at the reading of the gospel. And this seems to be clear from the fourth council of Carthage;[c] where, at his ordination, he is appointed to receive at the archdeacon's hand a

[u] Can. 20. [x] Can. 18. [y] De Episc. Tit. et Diacon. Cardin. p. 24.
[z] Conc. Laodic. Can. 43. ubi vid. Zonar. et Balsam.
[a] Inter Epist. Cypr. ep. viii. p. 15. [b] Ep. xxxiv. Presb. et Diac. p. 68. [c] Can. 6.

candlestick with a taper, that he may know it is the duty of his place to light up the lights in the church. This might very well be in those times, but it is certain the office of acolythus was in use long before that custom of setting up lights at the reading of the gospel was brought into the church. By Cyprian, also, is mentioned the office of the exorcist,[d] whose business was to attend the catechumens and the *energumeni*, or such as were possessed of the devil. For after the miraculous power of casting out devils began to cease, or at least not to be so common as it was, these possessed persons used to come to the outparts of the church, where a person was appointed to exorcise them, i. e. to pray over them, with such prayers as were peculiarly composed for those occasions; and this he did in the public name of the whole church, the people also at the same time praying within: by which means, the possessed person was delivered from the tyranny of the evil spirit; without any such charms and conjurations, and other unchristian forms and rites, which by degress crept into this office, and are at this day in use in the church of Rome. Besides, to the exorcist's office it belonged to instruct the catechumens, and to train them up in the first principles of the Christian faith: in which sense the exorcist is by Harmenopulus[e] explained by "catechist;" and to exorcise, (says Balsamon,[f]) is κατεχεῖν ἀπίστους, "to instruct unbelievers."

Next to the exorcist was the *lector*, or reader, (mentioned frequently by St. Cyprian;) whose business was to stand near the *ambo*, or pulpit, and to read those portions of holy scripture which were appointed to be read as principal parts of the divine service. This office, Julian, (who was afterwards emperor,) when a young student at Nicomedia took upon him, and became a reader in that church,[g] which he did only to blind his cousin Constantius, who began to suspect him as inclining to paganism, to which he openly revolted afterwards, and became a bitter and virulent enemy to Christians, making an ill use of those scriptures, which he had once privately studied and publicly read to the people. I know not whether it may be worth the while to take notice of the *ostiarii*, or door keepers, answer-

[d] Epist. xxiii. p. 49. et ep. lxxv. et ep. Firmil. ad Cypr. p. 223.
[e] Epist. Can. s. 1. tit. ix. Jur. Græc. Rom. p. 16. [f] In Can. 26. Conc. Laod.
[g] Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 1.

able to the *Nethinims* in the Jewish church, who were to attend the church doors at times of public meetings, to keep out notorious heretics, Jews and Gentiles, from entering into the Christian assemblies: it doubtless took its rise in the times of persecution, Christians then being forced to keep their meetings as private and clancular as they could, and to guard their assemblies with all possible diligence, lest some Jew or infidel, stealing in, should have gone and accused them before the magistrate. What other officers there were, (or whether any at all,) in those times, in and about the church, will not be worth our labour to inquire.

To these offices they were set apart by solemn rites of prayer and imposition of hands; a ceremony (so far as *χειροτονία* is strictly taken for lifting up the hand in suffrage) commonly used at Athens, and some of the states of Greece in the designing and electing persons to be public magistrates: but more particularly in use amongst the Jews, and from them, doubtless, (as many other of the synagogue rites,) transferred into the Christian church, and there constantly used, both as to the lifting up and laying on the hands, as the right of conferring ordination upon the ministers of Christ. Only it is here to be remembered, that there was a double imposition of hands, in setting apart ecclesiastical officers: the one was *καθιέρωσις*, or by way of "consecration," and this was the proper way of ordaining the first rank of officers, bishops, presbyters, and deacons; the other *εὐλογία*, by way of "blessing," hands being laid upon them only, as in the absolution of penitents, by way of solemn benediction, and thus the inferior officers, subdeacons, readers, &c., and deaconesses were set apart: all orders under bishops were ordained by the bishop; the bishop himself by all the bishops of that province, who used to meet together for that purpose, if nearness of place and other conveniencies would allow;[h] otherwise three (and in case of necessity two) might do it, the rest testifying their consent in writing; and the person thus ordained was to be confirmed by the metropolitan of that province. And whereas the council of Antioch provides,[i] that no bishop shall be ordained without the metropolitan being present, it is to be understood (as Balsamon tells us) of his leave and permission, or his appointing it to be so. For the

[h] Conc. Nicen. Can. 4.

[i] Can. 19.

ordination of the rest of the clergy, priests, deacons, &c., the act and presence of one bishop might suffice: and as no more than one was required, so one at least was necessary: the power of conferring orders being, even by those who otherwise have had no mighty kindness for episcopacy, acknowledged an unquestionable right of the episcopal office: insomuch that in the case of Athanasius, it was a just exception against Ischyras, that he had been ordained by Colythus,[k] who was no higher than a presbyter, and consequently his ordination by the council was adjudged null and void.

At all ordinations, especially of superior officers, the people of the place were always present, and ratified the action with their approbation and consent. And indeed it cannot be denied, but that the people, in some places especially, were very much considered in this affair, it being seldom or never done without their presence and suffrage.[l] To this end, the bishop was wont, before every ordination, to propound and publish the names of those who were to have holy orders conferred upon them, that so the people, who best knew their lives and conversations, might interpose, if they had any thing material to object against it. By which means, the unworthy were discovered and rejected, the deserving honoured and admitted, the ordination became legitimate and satisfactory, having passed the common vote and suffrage,, without any exception made against it, as Cyprian speaks. Hence the clergy, of what order soever, were said, *prædicari*, to be propounded or published: and this way seemed so fit and reasonable, that Severus the emperor, (a wise and prudent prince,) in imitation of the Christians, established it in the disposal of civil offices.[m] For when he had a mind to send out any governors of provinces, or to appoint receivers of his revenues, he propounded the names of those he intended, desiring the people to except against the persons, if they knew them guilty of any crimes which they were able to make good against them: "affirming it to be unfit, (says his own historian,) that when the Christians and Jews did it in publishing those who were to be ordained their priests and ministers, the same should not be observed in the election of governors of provinces,

[k] Athan. Apol. c. Arian. s. 12.

[l] Vid. Constit. Apost. l. viii. c. 4. Cypr. Epist. lxvii. p. 171, 172.

[m] Lamprid. in vit. Alex. Sev. c. 45.

who had the lives and fortunes of men committed to them." When the case so happened, that the ordination was more remote or private, they were then required to bring sufficient testimonials. Thus Cyprian,[n] when ordaining Saturus and Optatus to be readers; "we examined (says he) whether the testimonials agreed to them, which they ought to have who are admitted into the clergy."

And, indeed, they proceeded in this affair with all imaginable care and prudence;[o] they examined men's fitness for the place to which they were set apart, inquired severely what had been the course and manner of their life, how they had carried themselves in their youth, and whether they had governed it by the strict rules of piety. This ancient custom (as St. Basil calls it) was ratified by the Nicene council,[p] declaring "that none should be ordained presbyter without previous examination, especially a strict inquiry into his life and manners." For the apostolic church, (says Joseph the Egyptian, in his Arabic paraphrase of that canon,) admits none in this case, but him that is of great innocency and an unspotted life, free from those crimes and enormities which he there particularly reckons up. They suffered not men in those days to leap into ecclesiastical orders, but by the usual steps, and staying the appointed times. Cyprian commends Cornelius, bishop of Rome,[q] that he did not skip into the chair, but passed through all the ecclesiastical offices, ascending through all the degrees of religion, till he came *ad sacerdotii sublime fastigium*, "to the top of the highest order:" a thing expressly provided for by the synod of Sardis,[r] that no man, though never so rich, though furnished with never so good a knack of speech and oratory, should yet be made bishop before he had passed through the preceding orders of reader, subdeacon, deacon, and presbyter; that having been found fit in each of these, he might, step by step, ascend up to the episcopal chair: and that he should spend some considerable time in each of these degrees, that so his faith, and the innocency and excellency of his life, his constancy and moderation, might be made known to all; and his fitness for that sacred function being made apparent, might procure him the greater honour and reverence from others. Men were then forced to stay their full time before they could be promoted to any higher order; they

[n] Epist. xxix. ad Presb. et Diac. p. 55. [o] Basil, ep. liv. ad Chorepisc.
[p] Can. 9. [q] Ad Antonian. epist. lv. p. 103. [r] Can. 10.

did not commence divines and bishops in a day, *αὐθήμερον ἅγιοι καὶ θεολόγοι*, (as Nazianzen elegantly calls them,[s]) like some he complains of in his time, who were not polished by time and study, but fitted and made bishops all at once; whom therefore he wittingly compares to the dragon's teeth, which the fable tells us Cadmus sowed at Thebes, which immediately sprung up giants out of the earth, armed cap-a-pee, perfect men and perfect warriors in one day: and just such (says he) were some prelates consecrated, made wise and learned in one day, who yet understood nothing before, nor brought any thing to the order, but only a good will to be there. For the age of the persons that were to be ordained, they usually observed the apostolic canon, not to choose a novice, but of an age competent to that office that he was chosen to; though it varied according to times and persons, and the occasions of the church. For that of bishops, I find not any certain age positively set down. Photius,[t] in his Nomo-canon, speaks of an imperial constitution that requires a bishop not to be under thirty-five; but the Apostolical Constitutions allow not a man to be made a bishop under fifty years of age,[u] as having then passed all juvenile petulancies and disorders. It is certain, they were not generally (some extraordinary instances alter not the case) promoted to that office till they were of a considerable age; and thence frequently styled *majores natu* in the writings of the church. Presbyters were commonly made at thirty; yea, the council of Neocæsarea decreed,[x] that no man, though otherwise of never so unquestionable a conversation, should be ordained presbyter before that age: the reason whereof they give, because Christ himself was not baptized, nor began to preach, till the thirtieth year of his age. The council of Agde requires the same age,[y] but assigns another reason: not before thirty years of age, because then (say they) he comes to the age of a perfect man. Deacons were made at twenty-five, and the like distance and proportion observed for the inferior officers under them. I take no notice in this place of monks, hermits, &c., partly, because although they were under a kind of ecclesiastical relation, by reason of their more than ordinarily strict and severe profession of religion, yet were they not usually in holy orders; and partly, because monachism was of no very early

[s] Orat. i. de Theol. p. 535. et in laud. Bas. Orat. xx. p. 335.

[t] Τιτλ. α'. κεφ. κη'.

[u] Lib. ii. c. 1.

[x] Can. 11.

[y] Conc. Adg. Can. 17.

standing in the church, beginning, probably, about the times of the later persecutions: and even then, too, monks were quite another thing, both in profession, habit, and way of life, from what they are at this day, as will abundantly appear to him that will take the pains to compare the account which St. Jerome, Augustine, Palladius, Cassian, and others give of those primitive monks, with the several orders in the church of Rome at this day.

I shall only add, that out of the monks, persons were usually made choice of to be advanced into the clergy; as is evident, not only from multitudes of instances in the writers of the fourth and following centuries, but from an express law of the emperor Arcadius to that purpose:[z] the strictness of their lives, and the purity of their manners, more immediately qualifying them for those holy offices; insomuch, that many times they were advanced into the episcopal chair without going through the usual intermediate orders of the church. Several instances whereof (Serapion, Apollonius, Agatho, Aristo, and some others) Athanasius reckons up in his epistle to Dracontius,[a] who, being a monk, refused a bishopric to which he was chosen. But because we meet in the ancient writings of the church with very frequent mention of persons of another sex, "deaconesses," who were employed in many offices of religion, it may not be amiss in this place to give some short account of them. Their original was very early, and of equal standing with the infancy of the church: such was Phœbe in the church of Cenchris, mentioned by St. Paul; such were those two servant-maids spoken of by Pliny in his letters to the emperor, whom he examined upon the rack; such was the famous Olympias in the church of Constantinople; not to mention any more particular instances. They were either widows, and then not to be taken into the service of the church under threescore years of age, according to St. Paul's direction; or else virgins, who having been educated in order to it, and given testimony of a chaste and sober conversation, were set apart at forty. What the proper place and ministry of these deaconesses was in the ancient church, though Matthew Blastares seems to render a little doubtful,[b] yet certainly it principally consisted in such offices as these:[c] to attend upon the women at

[z] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. ii. de Episc. etc. l. 32.
[a] Sect. 8.
[b] Syntagm. c. 11. lit. T. p. 71.
[c] Epiph. Hæres. lxxix. c. 3.

times of public worship, especially in the administration of baptism, that when they were to be divested, in order to their immersion, they might overshadow them, so as nothing of indecency and uncomeliness might appear; sometimes they were employed in instructing the more rude and ignorant sort of women in the plain and easy principles of Christianity, and in preparing them for baptism; otherwhiles in visiting and attending upon women that were sick, in conveying messages, counsels, consolations, relief (especially in times of persecution, when it was dangerous for the officers of the church) to the martyrs, and them that were in prison. And these women, no doubt, it was, that Libanius speaks of amongst the Christians, who were so very ready to be employed in these offices of humanity.[d] But to return.

Persons being thus set apart for holy offices, the Christians of those days discovered no less piety in that mighty respect and reverence which they paid to them: that the ministers of religion should be peculiarly honoured and regarded, seems to have been accounted a piece of natural justice by the common sentiments of mankind; the most barbarous and unpolished nations, that ever had a value for any thing of religion, have always had a proportionable regard to them to whom the care and administration of it did belong. Julian, the emperor,[e] expressly pleads for it, as the most reasonable thing in the world, that priests should be honoured, yea, in some respects, above civil magistrates, as being the immediate attendants and domestic servants of God, our intercessors with heaven, and the means of deriving down great blessings from God upon us. But never was this clearlier demonstrated than in the practice of the primitive Christians, who carried themselves towards their bishops and ministers with all that kindness and veneration which they were capable to express towards them. St. Paul bears record to the Galatians,[f] that he was accounted so dear to them, that if the plucking out their eyes would have done him any good, they were ready to have done it for his sake. And St. Clemens[g] testifies of the Corinthians, that they walked in the laws of God, being subject to them that had the rule over them; yielding also due honour to the seniors or elder persons that were amongst them. That by ἡγούμενοι in this place he should mean "civil

[d] Orat. de vinctis, p. 56.
[e] Julian. fragm. oper. c, l. p. 542.
[f] Gal. iv. 15.
[g] Sect. 1.

magistrates," (as some have told us,) I can hardly be persuaded, both because it is the same word that is used by the author to the Hebrews,[h] "Obey, τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν, them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves;" (indeed, both Eusebius[i] and St. Jerome[j] of old observed such a mighty affinity in the phrase between this and the epistle to the Hebrews, as certainly to conclude St. Clemens to have been, if not the author, at least the translator of that epistle;) and also, because the sole occasion of St. Clemens's writing this epistle was a mutiny which they had made against the spiritual guides and governors; and therefore, according to the right art of orators, he first commends them for their eminent subjection to them, that he might with the more advantage reprove and censure them for their schism afterwards, which he does severely in the latter part of the epistle, and towards the end of it exhorts those who had laid the foundation of the sedition to become subject to their presbyters; and being instructed to repentance, to bow the knees of their hearts, to lay aside the arrogant and insolent boldness of their tongues, and to learn to subject and submit themselves. The truth is,[k] bishops and ministers were then looked upon as the common parents of Christians, whom as such they honoured and obeyed, and to whom they repaired for counsel and direction in all important cases. It is plain, from several passages in Tertullian,[l] that none could lawfully marry till they had first advised with the bishop and clergy of the church, and had asked and obtained their leave; which probably they did to secure the person from marrying with a Gentile, or any of them that were without,[m] and from the inconveniencies that might ensue upon such a match. No respect, no submission, was thought great enough, whereby they might do honour to them:[n] they were wont to kiss their hands, to embrace their feet, and at their going from, or returning home, or indeed their coming unto any place, to wait upon them, and either to receive or dismiss them with the universal confluence of the people. Happy they thought themselves if they could but entertain them in their houses, and bless their roofs with such welcome guests. Amongst

[h] Heb. xiii. 17.
[i] Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 38.
[j] De Script. Eccl. in Clem.
[k] Vid. Constit. Apost. l. ii. c. 33.
[l] De monogam. c. 11. Ad Uxor. l. ii. c. 29.
[m] Vid. Tertull. de Coron. mil. c. 13.
[n] Vid. Chrys. Hom. de S. Melet. Antioch. s. 2. vol. ii. p. 520.

the various ways of kindness which Constantine the Great shewed to the clergy, the writer of his life tells us,[n] that he used to treat them at his own table, though in the meanest and most despicable habit; he never went a journey, but he took some of them along with him, reckoning that thereby he made himself surer of the propitious and favourable influence of the Divine Presence. What honours he did them at the council of Nice, where he refused to sit down till they had given him intimation, with what magnificent gifts and entertainments he treated them afterwards, the same author relates at large.[o] The truth is, the piety of that devout and excellent prince thought nothing too good for those who were the messengers of God, and ministers of holy things; and so infinitely tender was he of their honour,[p] as to profess, that if at any time he should spy a bishop overtaken in any immodest and uncomely action, he would cover him with his own imperial robe, rather than others should take notice of it, to the scandal of his place and person. And because their spiritual authority and relation might not be sufficient to secure them from the contempt of rude and profane persons, therefore the first Christian emperors invested them with power even in civil cases, as the way to beget them respect and authority amongst the people. Thus Constantine (as Sozomen tells us,[q] and he sets it down as a great argument of that prince's reverence for religion) ordained, that persons contending in law, might, if they pleased, remove their cause out of the civil courts, and appeal to the judgment of the bishops, whose sentence should be firm, and take place before that of any other judges, as if it had been immediately passed by the emperor himself. And cases thus judged by bishops, all governors of provinces and their officers were presently to put into execution; which was afterwards ratified by two laws,[r] one of Arcadius, another of Honorius, to that purpose. This power the bishops sometimes delegated to their inferior clergy, making them judges in these cases; as appears from what Socrates[s] reports of Sylvanus, bishop of Troas, that finding a maladministration of this power, he took it out of the hands of his clergy, and

[n] De vit. Const. l. i. c. 42.
[o] Lib. iii.
[p] Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 11.
[q] Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 9.
[r] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. iv. de Episc. Audient. l. 7, 8.
[s] Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 37.

devolved the hearing and determining causes over to the laity. And to name no more, St. Augustine[t] more than once and again tells us, how much he was crowded, and even oppressed, in deciding the contests and causes of secular persons. It seems, they thought themselves happy in those days, if they could have their causes heard and determined by bishops.

A pious bishop and a faithful minister was, in those days, dearer to them than the most valuable blessings upon earth, and they could want any thing rather than be without them. When Chrysostom[u] was driven by the empress into banishment, the people, as he went along, burst into tears, and cried out, "It was better the sun should not shine, than that John Chrysostom should not preach." And when, through the importunity of the people, he was recalled from his former banishment, and diverted into the suburbs till he might have an opportunity to make a public vindication of his innocency,[x] the people not enduring such delays, the emperor was forced to send for him into the city, the people universally meeting him, and conducting him to his church with all expressions of reverence and veneration. Nay, while he was yet presbyter of the church of Antioch,[y] so highly was he loved and honoured by the people of that place, that though he was chosen to the see of Constantinople, and sent for by the emperor's letters, though their bishop made an oration on purpose to persuade them to it, yet would they by no means be brought to part with him; and when the messengers, by force, attempted to bring him away, he was forced, to prevent a tumult, to withdraw and hide himself, the people keeping a guard about him, lest he should be taken from them: nor could the emperor or his agents with all their arts effect it, till he used this wile; he secretly wrote to the governor of Antioch, who, pretending to Chrysostom that he had concerns of moment to impart to him, invited him to a private place without the city, where seizing upon him, by mules which he had in readines he conveyed him to Constantinople: where, that his welcome might be the more magnificent, the emperor commanded that all persons of eminency, both ecclesiastical and civil, should, with all possible pomp and state, go six miles to meet him. Of Nazi-

[t] Ep. 147. col. 685. vid. ep. Nebrid. ad Aug. ep. 114. et alibi passim.

[u] Chrys. Ep. 125. vol. iv. p. 763.

[x] Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 16. p. 324.

[y] Metaphras. in vit. Chrys. apud Surium ad diem 27.

anzen[z] (who sat in the same chair of Constantinople before him) I find, that when he would have left that bishopric, by reason of the stirs that were about it, and delivered himself up to solitude and a private life, as a thing much more suitable to his humour and genius, many of the people came about him, with tears beseeching him not to forsake his flock, which he had hitherto fed with so much sweat and labour. They could not then lose their spiritual guides, but they looked upon themselves as widows and orphans, resenting their death with a general sorrow and lamentation, as if they had lost a common father. Nazianzen reports,[a] that when his father (who was bishop of but a little diocese) lay very sick, and all óther remedies proved unsuccessful, the people generally flocked to church, and (though it was then the joyful time of Easter) broke out into mournful and passionate complaints, and with the most earnest prayers and tears besought God for his life. And of Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, he tells us,[b] that when he lay a dying, the whole city came about him, not able to bear his departure from them, praying, as if they would have laid hands upon his soul, and by force detained it in his body: they were (says he) even distracted with the thoughts of so great a loss, nor was there any who would not have been willing to have been deprived of part of his own life, might it have added unto his. His funeral was solemnized with all possible testimonies of love and honourable attendance, and with the abundant tears, not only of Christians, but of Jews and heathens; the confluence so vast, that many were pressed to death in the crowd, and sent to bear him company to his long home. And that we may see that their respect did not lie merely in a few kind words or external protestations, they made it good in more real and evident demonstrations, by providing liberal maintenance for them, parting at first with their own estates to supply the uses of the church, and after that, making no less large than frequent contributions, which could not but amount to very considerable sums, the piety of Christians daily adding to their liberality; of which we may make some estimate, by what the heathen historian,[c] with a little kind of envy, relates only of the church of Rome, (and doubtless it was so, in some

[z] Greg. Presb. de vit. Greg. Naz. præfix. oper. Naz.

[a] In laud. patr. Orat. xix. p. 304.

[b] In laud. Basil. Orat. xx. p. 371.

[c] Amm. Marcellin. l. xxvii. p. 1739.

proportion, in other places,) that the profits of the clergy, arising from oblations chiefly, was so great, as to enable them to live in a prince-like state and plenty. And not long after, it became the object not only of admiration but envy; insomuch that Chrysostom was forced to make one whole sermon "against those that envied the wealth of the clergy."[d] It was also the great care of those times, to free them from what might be either scandalous or burdensome to their calling. Constantine decreed,[e] that the orthodox clergy should be exempt from all civil offices, or whatever might hinder their attendance upon the services of the church: his son Constantius,[f] that bishops, in many cases, should not be chargeable in the secular courts, but be tried in an assembly of bishops; which privilege was extended by Honorius[g] to all the clergy, that they should be tried before their bishops; before whom also he ordained, that all causes properly belonging to religion should be brought, and be determined by them; and by another constitution,[h] that for the veneration that is due to the church, all ecclesiastical causes should be decided with all possible speed. And to name no more, that the persons of ministers might be secured from foreign attempts, he and his colleague Arcadius made a law,[i] that whosoever did offer any violence to them, should, upon conviction or confessing of the fact, be punished with death; and that the ministers of civil justice should not stay till the bishop complained of the injury that was done, (it being probable that he would rather incline to mercy and forgiveness,) but that every one in this case should be admitted and encouraged to prefer and prosecute the charge: and in case the rude multitude should by arms or otherwise obstruct execution, and that the powers of that place could not see it done, that then they should call in the assistance of the governor of the province, to see justice put into execution. And because, next to his person, nothing is so dear to a clergyman as his credit and reputation, therefore the emperor Honorius took care, by a law,[j] that whosoever (be he a person of the highest rank) should charge any clergyman with crimes which he was not able to make good, he himself should be publicly accounted vile and

[d] Vol. vi. p. 896. edit. Savil.
[e] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. x. c. 7. et Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. ii. l. 1, 2.
[f] Ibid. l. 12. et 21. [g] Ibid. tit. xi. l. 1. [h] Ibid. lib. ii. tit. iv. l. 7.
[i] Ibid. lib. xvi. tit. ii. l. 31. [j] Ibid. l. 41.

infamous; it being but just and equal, (says the law,) that as guilt should be punished, and offenders reckoned as spots and blemishes to the church, so that injured innocency should be righted and maintained. How infinitely tender the first general council of Constantinople was in this case, to secure the honour and good name of bishops and clergymen, against the malicious insinuations and charges of false accusers, may appear by the large provision which they make about it in the sixth canon of that council: and because it sometimes so happens, that a man's enemies are those of his own house, therefore the apostolical canons ordain,[k] that if any clergyman reproach and defame a bishop, he shall be deposed from his ministry; for thou mayest not (says the canon) "speak evil of the ruler of thy people:" but if it be a presbyter or deacon whom he thus reproaches, he shall be suspended from the execution of his office. So sacred and venerable did they then account the persons and concernments of those who ministered in the affairs of divine worship.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THEIR USUAL WORSHIP, BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC.

The Christians' worship of God in their families discovered. Their usual times of prayer. Praying before and after meals. Singing of psalms and reading the scriptures at the same time. Frequency in prayer noted in divers instances. Their great reverence for the holy scriptures, in reading, expounding, committing them to memory. Several instances of it. Their care in instructing their families in divine things. Singing of psalms mixed with their usual labours. An account of their public worship. The order of the service in their assemblies. Prayer: reading the scriptures: two lessons out of each Testament. Clemens's epistle, and the writings of other pious men, read in the church. Singing, a part of the public service. How ancient: what those hymns were. The sermon, or discourse, upon what subject usually. Such discourses called *tractatus*, and why. More sermons than one at the same time. Sermons preached in the afternoon as well as in the morning. The mighty concourse and confluence of people to these public solemnities. The departure of the catechumens, penitents, &c. The *missa catechumenorum*, what. The *missa fidelium*. The word *missa*, or mass, whence, and how used in the writers of those times. The singular reverence they shewed in these duties. Great modesty and humility. Praying with hands lift up in the form of a cross, why. They prayed either kneeling or standing. Sitting in prayer noted as a posture of great irreverence. Praying towards the east. The universality of this custom. The reasons of it inquired into. Their reverence in

[k] Can. 55, 56.

hearing God's word. The people generally stood. Standing up at the gospels. The remarkable piety and devotion of Constantine the Great. No departing the congregation till the blessing was given.

Thus far we have discovered the piety of those ancient times, as to those necessary circumstances that relate to the worship of God: we are next to see wherein their worship itself did consist, which we shall consider both as private and public, that which they performed at home, and that which was done in their solemn and church assemblies; only let it be remembered, that, under the notion of worship, I here comprehend all those duties of piety that refer to God. The duties of their private worship were of two sorts, either such as were more solemn and stated, and concerned the whole family; or such as persons discharged alone, or, at least, did not tie up themselves to usual times: for the first, which are properly family duties, they were usually performed in this order: at their first rising in the morning, they were wont to meet together, and to betake themselves to prayer, (as is plainly implied in Chrysostom's exhortation,[l]) to praise God for the protection and refreshment of the night, and to beg his grace and blessing for the following day; this was done by the master of the house, unless some minister of religion were present: it is probable, that at this time they recited the creed, or some confession of their faith, by which they professed themselves Christians, and, as it were, armed themselves against the assaults of dangers and temptations; however, I question not, but that now they read some parts of scripture, which they were most ready to do at all times, and therefore certainly would not omit it now. That they had their set hours for prayer—the third, sixth, and ninth hour—is plain, both from Cyprian,[m] Clemens Alexandrinus,[n] and others: this they borrowed from the Jews, who divided the day into four greater hours—the first, third, sixth, and ninth hour—the three last whereof were stated hours of prayer: the first hour began at six in the morning, and held till nine; the third from nine till twelve, and at this hour it was that the apostles and Christians were met together when the Holy Ghost descended upon them; the sixth hour was from twelve till three in the afternoon, and at this time "Peter went up to the house-top to pray;" the ninth

[l] Hom. i. de precat. vol. i. p. 750. Vid. Basil. Ep. ii. ad Greg. de vit. solit. s. 2.
[m] De Orat. Dom. p. 154. [n] Strom. lib. vii. c. 7.

was from three till six at night, and now it was that Peter and John went up to the temple, "it being the ninth hour of prayer:" this division was observed by the Christians of succeeding times, though whether punctually kept to in their family devotions, I am not able to affirm. About noon, before their going to dinner, some portions of scripture were read; and the meat being set upon the table,[n] a blessing was solemnly begged of God, as the fountain of all blessings, (and so religious herein was the good emperor Theodosius junior,[o] that he would never taste any meat, no not so much as a fig, or any other fruit, before he had first given thanks to the great Sovereign Creator,) and both meat and drink set apart with the sign of the cross, (a custom they used in the most common actions of life,) as is expressly affirmed both by Tertullian[p] and Origen;[q] where he also gives a form of such prayers as they were wont to use before meals; viz. that lifting up their eyes to heaven, they prayed thus: "Thou that givest food to all flesh, grant that we may receive this food with thy blessing: thou, Lord, hast said, that if we drink any thing that is deadly, if we call upon thy name it shall not hurt us; thou therefore, who art Lord of all power and glory, turn away all evil and malignant quality from our food, and whatever pernicious influence it may have upon us;" when they were at dinner, they sung hymns and psalms;[r] a practice which Clemens Alexandrinus[s] commends as very suitable to Christians, as a modest and decent way of praising God, while we are partaking of his creatures. Chrysostom[t] greatly pleads for it, that men should be careful to teach them their wives and children, and which they should use even at their ordinary works, but especially at meals, such divine songs being an excellent antidote against temptations: for, (says he,) as the devil is never more ready to ensnare us than at meals, either by intemperance, ease, or immoderate mirth, therefore both before and at meals we should fortify ourselves with psalms; nay, and when we rise from the table, with our wives and children, we should again

[n] Clem. Alex. Strom. l. vii. c. 7. Tert. Apol. c. 39.

[o] Sozom. præfat. ad Hist. Eccl. [p] De Coron. mil. c. 3. [q] Lib. ii. in Job. vol. ii. p. 893.

[r] Ne sit vel hora convivii gratiæ cœlestis immunis, sonet psalmos convivium sobrium, magis carissimos pasces, si sit nobis spiritalis auditio, prolectet aures religiosa mulcedo. Cyprian. Epist. ad Donat. in fine.

[s] Pædag. l. ii. c. 4. [t] In Psalm. xli. vol. iii. p. 147.

sing hymns to God.[u] They used also to have the scriptures read, and, as I have elsewhere noted out of Nazianzen, every time they took the cup to drink, made the sign of the cross, and called upon Christ. Dinner being ended, they concluded with prayer,[x] giving thanks to God for their present refreshment, and begging his continued provision of those good things which he had promised to them: so great a place had religion in those days, even in men's common and natural actions, and so careful were they not to starve the soul while they were feeding of the body: much after the same rate they spent the rest of the day, till the night approached, when before their going to rest, the family was again called to prayer, after which they went to bed; about midnight they were generally wont to rise to pray and to sing hymns to God:[y] this custom was very ancient, and doubtless took its original from the first times of persecution, when, not daring to meet together in the day, they were forced to keep their religious assemblies in the night; and though this was afterwards antiquated, as being found inconvenient for the generality of Christians, yet did it still continue in the nocturnal hours of monasteries and religious orders.

But besides these stated and ordinary devotions, performed by a joint concurrence of the family, the Christians of those days were careful to spend all the time they could, even when alone, in actions of piety and religion; they were most frequent in prayer. Eusebius[z] reports of St. James the Just, that he was wont every day to go alone into the church, and there kneeling upon the pavement so long to pour out his prayers to God, till his knees became as hard and brawny as a camel's: the same which Nazianzen[a] also tells us of his good sister Gorgonia, that by often praying her knees were become hard, and did, as it were, stick to the ground. Constantine the Great,[b] though burdened with the cares of so vast an empire, did yet every day at his wonted hours withdraw from all the company of the court, retire into his closet, and upon his knees offer up his prayers to God; and to let the world know how much he was devoted to this duty, he caused his image in all his gold coins, in his pictures

[u] Cypr. Epist. i. p. 7. Clem. Alex. ut supra.
[x] Basil. Ep. ii. ad Greg. de vit. solit. s. 6.
[y] Clem. Alex. pædag. l. ii. c. 9.
[z] Hist. Eccl. l. ii. c. 23. ex Hegisippo.
[a] In laud. Gorgon. Orat. x. p. 183.
[b] De vit. Const. l. iv. c. 22.

and statues, to be represented in the posture of a person praying, with his hands spread abroad, and his eyes lift up to heaven.[c] Their next care was, diligently and seriously to read the scripture, to be mighty in the divine oracles, as indeed they had an invaluable esteem of, and reverence for the word of God, as the book which they infinitely prized beyond all others; upon which account Nazianzen[d] very severely chides his dear friend Gregory Nyssen, that having laid aside the holy scriptures, (the most excellent writings in the world,) which he was wont to read both privately to himself, and publicly to the people, he had given up himself to the study of foreign and profane authors, desirous rather to be accounted an orator than a Christian. St. Augustine tells us,[e] that after his conversion, (how meanly soever he had before thought of them,) the scriptures were become the matter of his most pure and chaste delight, in respect whereof all other books (even those of Cicero himself, which once he had so much doted on) became dry and unsavoury to him. In the study of this book it was that Christians then mainly exercised themselves, as thinking they could never fully enough understand it, or deeply enough imprint it upon their hearts and memories. Of the younger Theodosius they tell us,[f] that rising early every morning, he, together with his sisters, interchangeably sung psalms of praise to God: the holy scriptures he could exactly repeat in any part of them, and was wont to discourse out of them with the bishops that were at court, as readily as if he had been an old bishop himself. We read of Origen,[g] though then but a child, that when his father commanded him to commit some places of scripture to memory, he most willingly set himself to it; and not content with the bare reading, he began to inquire into the more profound and recondite meaning of it, often asking his father, (to his no less joy than admiration,) what the sense of this or that place of scripture was; and this thirst after divine knowledge still continued and increased in him all his life; St. Jerome[h] reporting it out of a letter of one who was his great companion and benefactor, that he never went to meals without some part of scripture read; never to sleep, till some about him had read them to him; and that both by night

[c] De vit. Const. l. iv. c. 15.
[d] Epist. xliii. p. 804.
[e] Vid. Confess. l. iii. c. 5. et l. vii. c. 20, 21.
[f] Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 22.
[g] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 2.
[h] Ep. ad Marcell. vol. i. p. 129.

and day, no sooner had he done praying, but he betook himself to reading, and after reading returned again to prayer. Valens, deacon of the church of Jerusalem, a venerable old man, had so entirely given up himself to the study of the scriptures, that it was all one to him to read, or to repeat whole pages together.[i] The like we find of John, an Egyptian confessor, (whom Eusebius saw and heard,[k]) that though both his eyes were put out, and his body mangled with unheard-of cruelty, yet he was able at any time to repeat any places or passages either out of the Old or New Testament; "which when I first heard him do in the public congregation, I supposed him (says he) to have been reading in a book, till coming near and finding how it was, I was struck with great admiration at it." Certainly Christians then had no mean esteem of, took no small delight in these sacred volumes: for the sake of this book, (which he had chosen to be the companion and counsellor of his life,) Nazianzen[l] professes he had willingly undervalued and relinquished all other things: this was the mine where they enriched themselves with divine treasures, a book where they furnished themselves with a true stock of knowledge; as St. Jerome speaks of Nepotian,[m] that by daily reading and meditation he had made his soul a library of Christ; and he tells us of Blesilla,[n] a devout widow, that though she was so far overrun with weakness and sickness that her foot would scarce bear her body, or her neck sustain the burden of her head, yet she was never found without a bible in her hand.

Nor did they covetously hoard up and reserve this excellent knowledge to themselves, but freely communicated it to others, especially were careful to catechise and instruct their children and servants in the principles of religion. St. Clemens praises the Corinthians,[o] that they took care to admonish their young men to follow those things that were modest and comely, and accordingly exhorts them to instruct the younger in the knowledge of the fear of God, to make their children partakers of the discipline of Christ, to teach them how much humility and a chaste love do prevail with God; that the fear of him is good and useful, and preserves all those who with pure thoughts lead a

[i] Euseb. de Martyr. Palest. c. 11.
[k] Ibid. c. ult.
[l] De pace Orat. xii. p. 193.
[m] Epitaph. Nepot. n. 1. p. 25.
[n] Ep. ad Paul. p. 157.
[o] Sect. 1. et 21.

holy life, according to his will. The historian observes of Constantine,[p] that his first and greatest care towards his sons was to secure the happiness of their souls, by sowing the seeds of piety in their minds; which he did partly himself, instructing them in the knowledge of divine things, and partly by appointing such tutors as were most approved for religion:[q] and when he had taken them into a partnership of the government, and either by private admonitions or by letters gave them counsels for the steering themselves, this was always the first and chief, that they should prefer the knowledge and worship of God, the great King of the world, before all other advantages, yea, before the empire itself. For this, Nazianzen peculiarly commends his mother,[r] that not only she herself was consecrated to God, and brought up under a pious education, but that she conveyed it down as a necessary inheritance to her children; and it seems her daughter Gorgonia[s] was so well seasoned with these holy principles, that she religiously walked in the steps of so good a pattern, and did not only reclaim her husband, but educated her children and nephews in the ways of religion, giving them an excellent example while she lived, and leaving this as her last charge and request when she died. This was the discipline under which Christians were brought up in those times; religion was instilled into them betimes, which grew up and mixed itself with their ordinary labours and recreations, insomuch that the most rude and illiterate persons, instead of profane wanton songs, which vitiate and corrupt the minds of men, τὰς σατανικὰς ᾠδὰς, as Chrysostom calls them,[t] ("songs of the devil's composure,") used nothing but spiritual and divine hymns; so that (as St. Jerome[u] relates of the place where he lived) you could not go into the field, but you might hear the ploughman at his hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser singing David's psalms.

Thus they carried themselves at home; what they did in public, in their church-assemblies, on the Lord's day especially, is next to be considered: the manner whereof I shall briefly represent, as it generally, and for the most part, obtained in those ages; for it could not but vary something according to

[p] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 51.
[q] Ibid. c. 52.
[r] In Laud. Cæsaris, Orat. x. p. 161.
[s] Id. Orat. xi. p. 180.
[t] In Psalm. cxvii. vol. iii. p. 358.
[u] Epist. ad Marcell. vol. i. p. 127.

time and place. And here I should save myself the trouble of any farther search, by setting down the account which Justin Martyr and Tertullian give of their public worship, in their apologies for the Christians; but that I am satisfied they did not design to give a perfect and punctual account of what was done at their religious assemblies, as might sufficiently appear from this one thing; that the first of them, in those places, speaks not any thing of their hymns and psalms, which yet, that they were (even in the times wherein they lived) a constant part of the divine service, no man that is not wholly a stranger in church-antiquity can be ignorant of. I shall, therefore, out of them and others, pick up and put together what seems to have constituted the main body of their public duties, and represent them in that order wherein they were performed, which usually was in this manner: at their first coming together into the congregation they began with prayer, as Tertullian at least probably intimates,[x] (for I do not find it in any besides him;) "we come together (says he) unto God, that being banded as it were into an army, we may besiege him with our prayers and petitions; a violence which is very pleasing and grateful to him." I do not from hence positively conclude, that prayer was the first duty they began with, though it seems fairly to look that way; especially if Tertullian meant to represent the order as well as the substance of their devotions. After this followed the reading of the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, both the commentaries of the apostles and the writings of the prophets, as Justin Martyr informs us.[y] How much of each was read at one meeting in the first times is not known, it being then unfixed and arbitrary; because their meetings, by the sudden interruption of the heathens, were oft disturbed and broken up; and therefore both Justin and Tertullian confess, that they only read as much as occasion served, and the condition of the present times did require: but afterwards there were set portions assigned, both out of the Old and New Testament, two lessons out of each, as we find it in the author of the Apostolical Constitutions.[z] Nay, not only the canonical scriptures, but many of the writings of apostolical men, (such as were eminent for place and piety,) were in those days publicly read in the church: such was the famous epistle of St. Clemens to the Corinthians; of which, and

[x] Apol. c. 39. [y] Apol. i. s. 67. [z] Lib. ii. c. 57.

the custom in like cases, Dionysius bishop of Corinth, who lived about the year 172, gives Soter bishop of Rome this account: "To day (says he[a]) we kept holy the Lord's day, wherein we read your epistle, which we shall constantly read for our instruction, as we also do the first epistle which Clemens wrote to us." The like Eusebius reports of Hermas's Pastor,[b] (a book so called,) and St. Jerome of the writings of St. Ephrem,[c] the famous deacon of Edessa, that in some churches they were publicly read after the reading of the holy scriptures. About this part of the service it was that they sung hymns and psalms; a considerable part of the divine worship, (as it had ever been accounted both amongst Jews and Gentiles,) and more immediately serviceable for celebrating the honour of God, and lifting up the minds of men to divine and heavenly raptures. It was in use in the very infancy of the Christian church, spoken of largely by St. Paul, and continued in all ages after; insomuch that Pliny reports it was the main part of the Christians' worship,[d] "that they met together before day, to join in singing hymns to Christ, as God." These hymns were either extemporary raptures, so long as immediate inspiration lasted; or set compositions, either taken out of the holy scriptures, or of their own composing, as Tertullian tells us.[e] For it was usual then for any persons to compose divine songs to the honour of Christ, and to sing them in the public assemblies; till the council of Laodicea ordered,[f] that no psalms composed by private persons should be recited in the church; where, though by the ἰδιωτικοὶ ψαλμοὶ, the two Greek scholiasts will have certain psalms ascribed to Solomon and others to be understood, yet it is much more reasonable to understand it of private compositions, usual a long time in the church, and here, for good reason, prohibited. By this council it was likewise appointed,[g] that the psalms should not be one entire continued service, but that a lesson should be interposed in the midst, after every psalm; which was done (as Balsamon and Alexius Aristenus tell us) to take off the weariness of the people, whose minds might be apt to tire in passing through those prolix offices all together, especially the lessons being so large and many. In this duty the whole congregation bore a part, joining all together

[a] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 23. [b] Ibid. l. iii. c. 3.
[c] De Script. Eccl. in voc. Ephrem. [d] Lib. x. ep. 97.
[e] Apol. c. 39. Euseb. l. v. c. 28. [f] Can. 59. [g] Can. 17.

in a common celebration of the praises of God; afterwards the custom was to sing *alternatim*, course by course, answering one another; first brought in (as we are told[h]) by Flavianus and Diodorus in the church of Antioch, in the reign of Constantine: but, if we may believe Socrates,[i] some hundreds of years before that, by Ignatius, who was bishop of that church, who having in a vision heard the angels praising the Holy Trinity with alternate hymns, thereupon introduced the use of it in that church, which from thence spread itself into all other churches: and whether Pliny (who lived about that time) might not mean some such thing by his *secum invicem canere*, that the Christians sung hymns one with another, or in their courses, may be considered by those who think it worth their labour to inquire. In the mean time we proceed. "The reader having done, (they are the words of Justin the Martyr,[j]) the president of the assembly makes a sermon by way of instruction and exhortation, to the imitation and practice of those excellent things that they had heard." And indeed, sermons, in those times, were nothing else but the expositions of some part of the scriptures which had been read before, and exhortations to the people to obey the doctrines contained in them; and commonly were upon the lesson which was last read, because that being freshest in the people's memory, was most proper to be treated of, as St. Augustine[k] both avers the custom, and gives the reason. Hence, in the writers of the church, preachers came to be called *tractatores*, and their sermons *tractatus*, because they handled or treated of such places of scripture as had been a little before read unto the people. According as occasion was, these sermons were more or fewer; sometimes two or three at the same assembly, the presbyters first and then the bishop, as is expressly affirmed in the Apostolical Constitutions:[l] "then (i. e. after the reading of the gospel) let the presbyters exhort the people one by one, not all at once, and after all the bishop, as it is fitting for the master to do." And thus Gregory Nyssen excuses himself for not introducing his sermons with a tedious preface,[m] because he would not be burdensome to the people, who had already taken pains to hear those admirable discourses that had been made before him.

[h] Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. ii. c. 24. [i] Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 8. [j] Apol. i. s. 67.
[k] Serm. 237. de Temp. vol. x. col. 1116. [l] Lib. ii. c. 57.
[m] *Εἰς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ χειροτονίας*, vol. i. p. 872.

This course they held not in the morning only, but likewise in the afternoon, (at sometimes at least,) when they had their public prayers and sermons to the people. This Chrysostom [n] assures us of, in an homily upon this very subject, in commendation of those who came to church after dinner, and that, as he tells them, in greater numbers than before; who instead of sleeping after dinner came to hear the divine laws expounded unto them; instead of walking upon the exchange, and entertaining themselves with idle and unprofitable chat, came and stood amongst their brethren, to converse with the discourses of the prophets. And this, he tells them, he puts them in mind of, not that it was a reproach to eat and drink, but that having done so, it was a shame to stay at home, and deprive themselves of those religious solemnities. The same it were easy to make good from several passages in St. Basil, St. Augustine, and others, who frequently refer to those sermons which they had preached in the morning.

But how many soever the discourses were, the people were ready enough to entertain them, flocking to them as to their spiritual meals and banquets. "We meet together (says Tertullian [o]) to hear the holy scriptures rehearsed to us, that so (according to the quality of the times) we may be either forewarned or corrected by them: for certainly with these holy words we nourish our faith, erect our hope, seal our confidence; and, by these inculcations, are the better established in obedience to the divine commands." Nazianzen [p] tells us what vast numbers used to meet in his church at Constantinople, of all sexes, of all sorts and ranks of persons, rich and poor, honourable and ignoble, learned and simple, governors and people, soldiers and tradesmen; all here unanimously conspiring together, and greedily desirous to learn the knowledge of divine things. The like Chrysostom [q] reports of the church of Antioch, that they would set aside all affairs at home, to come and hear sermons at church; he tells them, it was the great honour of the city, not so much that it had large suburbs and vast numbers of people, or brave houses with gilded dining rooms, as that it had a diligent and attentive people. And elsewhere,[r] that it was the great en-

[n] Hom. x. ad pop. Antioch. p. 116. vol. i.
[o] Apol. c. 39.
[p] Orat. xxxii. p. 517.
[q] Hom. lvi. vol. i. p. 623.
[r] Hom. iv. in verb. Esaiæ, vid. Dom. etc. vol. iii. p. 750.

couragement of his ministry, to see such a famous and cheerful concourse, a people so well ordered and desirous to hear: that it was this advanced their city above the honour of a senate, or the office of a consul, or the variety of statues or ornaments, or the plenty of its merchandise, or the commodiousness of its situation; in that its people were so earnest to hear and learn, its churches so thronged and crowded, and all persons inflamed with such an insatiable desire of the word that was preached to them; yea, that this it was that adorned the city, even above Rome itself. And indeed the commendation is the greater, in that commonness did not breed contempt; it being usual in that church, (as Chrysostom often intimates,) for a good part of the year, to have sermons every day.

Well, sermon being ended,[s] prayers were made with and for the catechumens, penitents, possessed, and the like, according to their respective capacities and qualifications; the persons that were in every rank departing as soon as the prayer that particularly concerned them was done: first the catechumens, and then the penitents, as is prescribed in the nineteenth canon of the Laodicean council. For no sooner was the service thus far performed, but all that were under baptism, or under the discipline of penance, i. e. all that might not communicate at the Lord's table, were commanded to depart, the deacon crying aloud, *Ὅσοι κατηχούμενοι προέλθετε*, "Those that are catechumens go out:" in the Latin church the form was, *ite, missa est;* "Depart, there is a dismission of you:" *missa* being the same with *missio*, as *remissa* oft used in some writers for *remissio*, (and so the word *missa* is used by Cassian[t] even in his time, for the dismission of the congregation.) Hence it was that the whole service, from the beginning of it till the time that the hearers were dismissed, came to be called *missa catechumenorum*, "the mass, or service of the catechumens;" as that which was performed afterwards at the celebration of the eucharist was called *missa fidelium*, "the mass, or service of the faithful;" because none but they were present at it: and in these notions, and no other, the word is often to be met with in Tertullian, and other ancient writers of the church. It is true, that in process of time, as the discipline of the catechumens wore out, so that title which belonged to the first part of the

[s] Constit. Apost. l. viii. c. 6.

[t] De Instit. Monach. l. iii. c. 7.

service was forgotten, and the name *missa* was appropriated to the service of the Lord's supper; and accordingly was made use of by the church of Rome, to denote that which they peculiarly call the mass, or the propitiatory sacrifice of the altar, at this day. And the more plausibly to impose this delusion upon the people, they do, with a great deal of confidence, muster up all those places of the fathers where the word *missa* is to be found, and apply it to their mass; though it would puzzle them to produce but one place, where the word is used in the same sense as they use it now, out of any genuine and approved writer of the church, for at least the first four hundred years. But to return. The catechumens, &c. being departed, and the church doors shut, they proceeded to the Lord's supper, at which the faithful only might be present, wherein they prayed for all states and ranks of men, gave the kiss of charity, prayed for consecration of the eucharist, then received the sacramental elements, made their offerings, and such like; of which I do not now speak particularly, because I intend to treat distinctly of the sacraments afterwards. For the same reason I say nothing concerning their admonitions, church-censures, absolutions, &c., because these will come under consideration in another place: as also, because though managed at their public assemblies, were yet only accidental to them, and no settled parts of the divine service. This, in short, was the general form of public worship in those ancient times; which, although it might vary somewhat according to times and places, did yet, for the main and substance of it, hold in all.

That which remains, is a little to remark how the Christians carried themselves in the discharge of these solemn duties, which certainly was with singular reverence and devotion, such gestures and actions, as they conceived might express the greatest piety and humility. "Let both men and women (says Clemens of Alexandria[u]) come to church in comely apparel, with a grave pace, with a modest silence, with a love unfeigned, chaste both in body and mind, and so as they may be fit to put up prayers to God." "Let our speech in prayer (says Cyprian[x]) be under discipline, observing a decorous calmness and modesty: we are to remember that we are under the eye of God, whom we are not to offend either in the habit of our body, or the manner of our speech;

[u] Pædag. l. iii. c. 11.

[x] De Orat. Dom. p. 140.

for as it is the fashion of those that are impudent to clamour and make a noise, so, on the contrary, it becomes a sober man to pray with a modest voice. When, therefore, we come together with our brethren into the assembly, to celebrate the divine sacrifices with the minister of God, we ought to be mindful of order, and a reverent regard, and not to throw about our prayers with a wild and confused voice, or with a disorderly prattling to cast forth those petitions which ought with the greatest modesty to be put up to God." The men prayed with their heads bare, as not ashamed to look up to heaven for what they begged of God; the women covered, as a sign of the modesty of that sex; and therefore Tertullian[y] severely checks the practice of some women in his time, who in time of worship had no covering on their heads, or what was as good as none: "what reproof (says he) do they deserve that continue unveiled in singing psalms, or in any mention of God? Or do they think it is enough to lay some thin and slight thing over their heads in prayer, and then think themselves covered?" Where he manifestly refers to those rules which the apostle prescribes in this case; and concludes, at last, that they should, at all times and in all places, be mindful of the rule, being ready and provided against all mention of the name of God; who, if he be in women's hearts, will be known on their heads, viz. by a modest carriage and covering of them in their addresses to him. Their hands they did not only lift up to heaven, (a posture in prayer common both among Jews and Gentiles,) but they did expand and spread them abroad, that so by this means they might shadow out an image of the cross, or rather a resemblance of him that hung upon it, as Tertullian more than once and again informs us.[z] Prayer (says another[a]) is a conversing with God, and the way to heaven; and to stretch out our hands is to form the resemblance of Christ crucified, which whoever prays should do, not only as to the form and figure, but in reality and affection; for as he that is fastened to the cross surely dies, so he that prays should crucify the desires of the flesh, and every inordinate lust and passion. In the performing of this duty they either kneeled (which was most usual) or stood, which they always did upon the Lord's day, for a reason which we have spoken of before: sitting was ever held a posture of

[y] De Virg. veland. p. 504. [z] De Orat. c. 11. Apol. c. 39.

[a] Asterius Amasen. Hom. de precat. apud Phot. Cod. CCLXXI. col. 1496.

great rudeness and irreverence; nay, Tertullian[b] falls heavy upon some that used presently to clap themselves down upon their seats as soon as ever prayer was done, and downright charges it as against scripture: if it be an irreverent thing (as he argues) to sit down before, or over-against, a person for whom thou hast a mighty reverence and veneration, how much more does it savour of irreligion to do so in the presence of the living God, while the angel is yet standing by thee to carry up the prayer to heaven? unless we have a mind to reproach God to his face, and tell him that we are weary of the duty.

Another custom which they had in prayer was, that they constantly prayed towards the east. This was so universally common, that there is scarce any ancient ecclesiastical writer but speaks of it; though not many of them agree in assigning the reason of it. The custom, doubtless, begun very early, and is generally ascribed to the apostles; so the author of the Questions and Answers assures us,[c] and tells us it was because the east was accounted the most excellent part of the creation; and seeing in prayer we must turn our faces towards some quarter, it was fittest it should be towards the east; just (says he) as in making the sign of the cross in the name of Christ, we use the right hand, because it is better than the left, not in its own nature, but only in its posture and fitness for our use. St. Basil[d] likewise reckons it amongst the traditions that had been derived from the apostles, but tells us the mystery of it was, that hereby they respected Paradise which God planted in the east, begging of him that they might be restored to that ancient country from whence they had been cast out. This might probably be with those who dwelt in the Western parts of the world; but how it could be done by those who lived east of the Garden of Eden, (suppose in any parts of India,) I am not able to imagine. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us,[e] that herein they had respect to Christ; for as the east is the birth and womb of the natural day, from whence the sun (the fountain of all sensible light) does arise and spring, so Christ, the true Sun of Righteousness, who arose upon the world with the light of truth, when it sat in the darkness of error and ignorance, is in scripture styled the East, and therefore

[b] De Orat. c. 12.
[c] Quest. 118.
[d] De Spir. Sanct. c. 27. Athan. ad Antioc. quest. 37. Constit. Apost. l. ii. c. 57.
[e] Strom. l. vii. p. 724.

our prayers are directed thither: for which reason, Tertullian[f] calls the east, the figure, or the type of Christ. But whatever the true reason was, I am sure it is a sober account which Athanasius gives of it:[g] "we do not (says he) worship towards the east, as if we thought God any ways shut up in those parts of the world, but because God is in himself, and is so styled in scripture, the true light: in turning, therefore, towards that created light, we do not worship it, but the great Creator of it; taking occasion from that most excellent element to adore that God who was before all elements and ages of the world." This was their carriage for prayer; nor were they less humble and reverent in other parts of worship: they heard the scriptures read and preached with all possible gravity and attention; which that they might the better do, they were wont to stand all the while the sermon continued, none sitting then but the bishop and presbyters that were about him. So Optatus expressly tells us,[h] that the people had no privilege to sit down in the church; though whether the custom was universally so in all places, I much doubt. Nay, St. Augustine tells us,[i] that in some transmarine (I suppose he means the Western) churches it was otherwise, the people having seats placed for them as well as the ministers: but generally the people stood; partly to express the greater reverence, partly to keep their attentions awake and lively. Hence it was part of the deacon's office (as Chrysostom tells us,[k] and the same we find in the ancient Greek liturgies) to call upon the people with an ὀρθοιστῶμεν καλῶς, "let us duly stand upright," respecting the decent posture of their bodies, though withal principally intending the elevation of their minds, the lifting up their thoughts from low sordid objects to those spiritual and divine things they were then conversant about. But whatever they did in other parts of the public service, they constantly stood up at the reading of the gospel; a custom generally embraced in all parts of the Christian world. Therefore Sozomen,[l] discoursing of the various rites observed in several churches, notes it as an unusual thing in the bishop of Alexandria, that he did not rise up when the gospels were read; a thing (says he) which I never saw nor heard of in any other place. And Philostorgius tells us of Theophilus the

[f] Contra Valent. c. 3.
[g] Ad Antioc. quest. 37.
[h] De Schism. Donat. l. iv. p. 115.
[i] De Catech. rudib. c. 13. vol. iv. col. 907.
[k] De incomparab. Dei natur. hom. iv. p. 353. vol. i.
[l] Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 19.

Indian bishop,[m] that amongst several irregularities which he corrected in those churches, he particularly reformed this, that the people were wont to sit while the lessons out of the gospel were read to them. Nor did the greatest personages think themselves too high to express this piece of reverence in their attendance upon the King of kings. It is very memorable what we read concerning the great Constantine,[n] that when, upon occasion, Eusebius was to make a panegyric concerning the sepulchre of our Saviour, though it was not in the church, but in the palace, yet he refused to sit all the time; and when Eusebius beseeched him to sit down in his throne, that was hard by him, he would not, but attentively heard, judged, and approved those things that were spoken. And when, after a good while, the sermon having been prolix, Eusebius, out of compliance, would have broken off and done, he called to him to go on till he came to the full end of his discourse: whereupon he was again solicited to sit down, but refused; "affirming it to be unfit to attend upon any discourse concerning God, and much more at this time, with ease and softness; and that it was very consonant to piety and religion, that discourses about divine things should be heard standing:" so great a reverence had that excellent prince for the solemnities of divine worship. In the discharge of these holy exercises, as they carried themselves with all seriousness and gravity, so they continued in them till they were completely finished: there was then no such airiness and levity as now possesses the minds of men; no snatching at some pieces of the worship, *tanquam canis ad Nilum*, and gone again; no rude disorderly departing the congregation, till the whole worship and service of God was over. And therefore, when this warmth and vigour of the first ages was a little abated, the council of Orleans thought good to re-establish the primitive devotion by this canon;[o] "that when the people came together for the celebration of divine service, they should not depart till the whole solemnity was over, and the bishop or presbyter had given the blessing."

[m] Hist. Eccl. l. iii. n. 5. [n] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 33. [o] Can. 22.

CHAPTER X.

OF BAPTISM, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF IT IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

Four circumstances considered. Baptism, by whom administered. By none usually without the leave of the bishop. The great controversy about rebaptizing those that had been baptized by heretics. An account of it out of Cyprian. Laymen, how suffered to baptize. The opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism. The case of Athanasius, his baptizing when but a child. Women never permitted to baptize. Persons to be baptized, who. Infants. Sufficient evidence for infant baptism in the ancient writers of the church. Some passages out of Cyprian noted. The baptized most-what adult persons. The stated times of baptism, Easter and Whitsuntide, and why. Especially upon Easter-eve, and why. In cases of necessity, at any other time. *Clinici*, who. Clinic baptism accounted less perfect, why. Usual to defer baptism till a death-bed, and the reason of it noted in Constantine and others. Being baptized for the dead, what (probably.) The usual place of baptism in or near the church; always before the congregation. The *baptisterium*, or font, where it stood, and how large. Its distinct apartments for men and women. A curiosity in many of those times of being baptized in Jordan, and why. The manner of the administration. The person baptized looked towards the west, and why. Their answering as to their profession of their faith. Their solemn abrenunciation made twice, and the form of it. Sureties in baptism. Persons baptized exorcised; what meant by it. Unction, upon what account used; several reasons of it assigned by the fathers. The sign of the cross made in baptism evident out of the ancient fathers. Of immersion, or putting the person under water; what it shadowed out. Generally in use in those countries; not absolutely necessary in others. Trine immersion; different reasons of it assigned by the fathers. It obtained not in Spain, and why. A second unction. Persons after baptism clothed in white garments, and why. These kept in the church as a testimony of their solemn engagement. A memorable instance out of Victor Uticensis. A brief account of confirmation. The neglect of it bewailed.

Our Lord having instituted baptism and the Lord's supper, as the two great sacraments of the Christian law, they have accordingly been ever accounted principal parts of public worship in the Christian church: we shall treat first of baptism, as being the door by which persons enter in, the great and solemn rite of our initiation into the faith of Christ; concerning which, four circumstances are chiefly to be inquired into: the persons by and upon whom, the time when, the place where, the manner how this sacrament was administered in the ancient church.

For the persons by whom this sacrament was administered, they were the ministers of the gospel, the stewards of the mysteries of Christ, baptizing and preaching the gospel, being joined together by our Saviour in the same commission; usually it was

done by the bishop, the προεστὼς in Justin Martyr, the *antistes* in Tertullian, the president or chief minister of the congregation, the *summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus*, as he calls him, without whose leave and authority neither presbyters nor deacons might take upon them to baptize, as not only Ignatius [p] but Tertullian [q] expressly tell us; and if they did it, it was only in case of necessity, as is affirmed by an ancient author,[r] who lived in or near the time of Cyprian. The same St. Jerome[s] assures us was the custom in his time, though otherwhiles we find the bishop to begin the action, and the presbyters to carry it on and finish it.[t] But as Christianity increased, this became a more familiar part of the presbyter's and the deacon's office, and, doubtless, had been more or less executed by them from the beginning, though out of reverence to the bishop, and to preserve the honour of the church, (as Tertullian gives the reason,) they did it not without his leave and deputation; and it is certain that Philip baptized the eunuch, who yet was of no higher order than that of deacon. Nor was it accounted enough by some in those times, that baptism was conferred by a person called to the ministry, unless he was also orthodox in the faith. This became matter of great bustle in the church: hence sprang that famous controversy between Cyprian and Stephen, bishop of Rome, concerning the rebaptizing those that had been baptized by heretics, (of which there is so much in Cyprian's writings,) Cyprian asserting that they ought to be rebaptized, the other as stiffly maintaining it to be both against the doctrine and practice of the church. This begot great heats and feuds between those good men, and engaged a great part of the whole Christian church in the quarrel; Cyprian endeavouring to strengthen his cause, not only by arguments from scripture, but by calling a council at Carthage of eighty-seven African bishops, who all concluded for his opinion. How truly Cyprian maintained this, I am not concerned to inquire; only I take notice of two things which he and his followers pleaded by way of abatement to the rigour of their opinion. First,[u] that hereby they did not assert

[p] Epist. ad Smyrneos, s. 8.

[q] De Bapt. c. 17.

[r] De non rebapt. apud Cypr. p. 138.

[s] Dial. adv. Lucifer. p. 139.

[t] Ambr. de Sacram. l. iii. c. 1.

[u] Cypr. Epist. lxxi. ad Quint. de Hæret. bapt. p. 193. et Conc. Carth. apud Cypr. Sent. xxxv. p. 236.

rebaptization to be lawful, this they expressly deny to receive any patronage from their practice, for they looked upon that baptism that had been conferred by heretics as null and invalid, (seeing heretics being out of the church could not give what they had not,) and, therefore, when any returned to the union of the church, they could not properly be said to be rebaptized, seeing they did but receive what (lawfully) they had not before. Secondly,[x] that they did not promiscuously baptize all that came over from heretical churches, for where any had been lawfully baptized by orthodox ministers before their going over to them, these they received, at their return, without any other ceremony than imposition of hands, baptizing those only who never had any other baptism than that which heretics had conferred upon them. Cyprian being thus severe against baptism dispensed by heretical ministers, we may wonder what he thought of that which was administered by mere lay unordained persons, which yet was not uncommon in those times; for that laymen (provided they were Christians, and baptized themselves) might and did baptize others in cases of necessity, is so positively asserted[y] by Tertullian, Jerome, and others, that no man can doubt of it. A custom ratified by the fathers of the Illiberine council,[z] with this proviso, that if the persons so baptized lived, they should receive confirmation from the bishop. This, without question, arose from an opinion they had of the absolute and indispensable necessity of baptism, without which they scarce thought a man's future condition could be safe, and that therefore it was better it should be had from any, than to depart this life without it; for excepting the case of martyrs,[a] (whom they thought sufficiently qualified for heaven by being baptized in their own blood; insisting upon a twofold baptism, one of water in time of peace, another of blood in the time of persecution, answerable to the water and blood that flowed out of our Saviour's side; excepting these,) they reckoned no man could be saved without being baptized, and cared not much, in cases of necessity, so they had it, how they came by it. As for the act of Athanasius, (mentioned by the author of his Life in Photius,[b] and more largely related by Sozomen[c]) when a boy, playing with the rest

[x] Cypr. ibid. et Conc. Carth. Sent. viii. et Cyril. præf. Catech. ad Illum.
[y] Locis antea citat. [z] Can. 38. [a] Cyril. ad Illum. Catech. iii.
[b] Cod. CCLVIII. col. 1429. [c] Hist. Eccl. l. ii. c. 17.

of his companions, they formed themselves into a kind of church-society, Athanasius was chosen bishop, and others personated the catechumens ready to be baptized, and were accordingly, with all the usual formalities, baptized by Athanasius. This juvenile ceremony being ended, they were brought before Alexander, the then bishop of Alexandria, (who had himself beheld the whole scene,) who inquiring into the reasons and circumstances of the action, and having consulted with his clergy that were about him, concluded that those children ought not to be rebaptized, and therefore only added his confirmation to them. But this being only a particular case, and the like not mentioned, that I remember, by any writer of those times, I only relate it as I find it. But though this power, in cases of necessity, was allowed to men, (who were capable of having the ministerial office conferred upon them,) yet was it ever denied to women, whom the apostle has so expressly forbidden to exercise any ministry in the church of God, and accordingly censured in the Apostolical Constitutions, to be not only dangerous, but unlawful and impious. Indeed, in the churches of the heretics, women, even in those times, took upon them to baptize; but it was universally condemned and cried out against by the orthodox, and constantly affixed as a note of dishonour and reproach upon the heretical parties of those times; as abundantly appears from Tertullian,[d] Epiphanius,[e] and others, who record the heretical doctrines and practices of those first ages of the church; however, afterwards it crept in in some places, and is allowed and practised in the church of Rome at this day:[f] where, in cases of necessity, they give leave that it may be administered by any, and in any language, whether the person administering be a clergy or a layman, (yea, though under excommunication,) whether he be a believer or an infidel, a catholic or an heretic, a man or a woman; only taking care that (if it may be) a priest be preferred before a deacon, a deacon before a subdeacon, a clergyman before a laic, and a man before a woman; together with some other cases, which are there wisely provided for.

From the persons ministering we proceed to the persons upon whom it was conferred, and they were of two sorts, infants and

[d] Tert. de Bapt. c. 17. De vel. virg. c. 9. De præscript. adv. hæret. c. 41.

[e] Epiph. Hæres. xlix. et lxxix.

[f] Ritu. Rom. de Sacram. Baptism. Rubric. de ministr. Bapt.

adult persons. How far the baptizing of infants is included in our Saviour's institution, it is not my work to dispute; but certainly, if in controverted cases the constant practice of the church, and those who immediately succeeded the apostles, be (as no man can deny it is) the best interpreter of the laws of Christ, the dispute, one would think, should be at an end: for that it always was the custom to receive the children of Christian parents into the church by baptism, we have sufficient evidence, for the greatest part, of the most early writers, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, &c., whose testimonies I do not produce, because I find them collected by others;[g] and the argument thence so forcible and conclusive, that the most zealous opposers of infant baptism know not how to evade it; the testimonies being so clear, and not the least shadow that I know of in those times of any thing to make against it. There was indeed, in Cyprian's time, a controversy about the baptizing of infants, not whether they ought to be baptized, (for of that there was no doubt,) but concerning the time when it was to be administered, whether on the second, or third, or whether, as circumcision of old, to be deferred till the eighth day. For the determining of which, Cyprian, sitting in council with sixty-six bishops, writes a synodical epistle to Fidus,[h] to let him know, that it was not necessary to be deferred so long; and that it was their universal judgment and resolution, that the mercy and grace of God was not to be denied to any, though as soon as he was born: concluding, that it was the sentence of the council, that none ought to be forbidden baptism and the grace of God; which as it was to be observed and retained towards all men, so much more towards infants and new-born children. And that this sentence of theirs was no novel doctrine, St. Augustine assures us;[i] where, speaking concerning this synodical determination, he tells us, that in this, Cyprian did not make any new decree, but kept the faith of the church most firm and sure. I shall only take notice of one place more out of Cyprian,[k] which methinks evidently makes for this purpose, where describing the great wickedness and miserable condition of the lapsed, such as,

[g] J. G. Voss. de Bapt. disput. xiv. p. 178. et seq. Forbes. Instruct. Hist. Theol. l. x. c. 5. sect. 14. et seq. Dr. Ham. Defence of Infant Baptism, c. 4. sect. 2.

[h] Epist. lxiv. p. 158, etc.

[i] Ep. xxviii. ad Hierom.

[k] De Lapsis. p. 125.

to avoid persecution, had done sacrifice to the idols, he urges this as one of the last and highest aggravations; that by their apostacy their infants and children were exposed to ruin, and had lost that which they had obtained at their first coming into the world, (which whether he means it of their right to baptism, or their having been actually baptized, and losing the fruit and benefit of their baptism, is all one to my purpose,) and therefore he brings them in thus elegantly pleading against their parents at the great day: "It was no fault of ours; we did not of ourselves forsake the sacraments of our Lord, and run over to join with profane impieties; the unfaithfulness of others has undone us, we have found our parents to be murderers; they denied us God for our Father, and the church for our mother; for while we, alas, were little, unable to take any care of ourselves, and ignorant of so great a wickedness, we were ensnared by the treachery of others, and by them betrayed into a partnership of their impieties."

This was the case of infants; but those who made up the main body of the baptized in those days were adult persons, who flocking over daily in great numbers to the faith of Christ, were received in at this door. Usually they were, for some considerable time, catechized and trained up in the principles of the Christian faith; till having given testimony of their proficiency in knowledge,[l] (to the bishop or presbyter, who were appointed to take their examination, and to whom they were to give an account once a week of what they had learned,) and of a sober and regular conversation, they then became candidates for baptism, and were accordingly taken in: which brings me to the next circumstance considerable, concerning

The time when baptism was wont to be administered. At first, all times were alike, and persons were baptized as opportunity and occasion served; but the discipline of the church being a little settled, it began to be restrained to two solemn and stated times of the year, viz. Easter and Whitsuntide.[m] At Easter, in memory of Christ's death and resurrection, correspondent unto which are the two parts of the Christian life, represented and shadowed out in baptism, dying unto sin, and rising again unto newness of life;[n] in order to which, the parties

[l] Conc. Laod. Can. 46.

[m] Tert. de Bapt. c. 19.

[n] Cyril. præf. Catech. ad Illum.

to be baptized were to prepare themselves by a strict observation of Lent, disposing and fitting themselves for baptism by fasting and prayer. In some places, particularly the churches of Thessaly, Easter was the only time of baptism, (as Socrates tells us,[o]) which was the reason why many amongst them died unbaptized: but this was an usage peculiar to them alone. The ancient custom of the church (as Zonaras tells us[p]) was for persons to be baptized, especially upon the Saturday before Easter-day, the reason whereof was, that this being the great or holy sabbath, and the mid-time between the day whereon Christ was buried, and that whereon he rose again, did fitliest correspond with the mystery of baptism, as it is the type and representation both of our Lord's burial and resurrection. At Whitsuntide, in memory of the Holy Ghost's being shed upon the apostles, the same being in some measure represented and conveyed in baptism. When I say that these were the two fixed times of baptism, I do not strictly mean it of the precise days of Easter and Whitsuntide, but also of the whole intermediate space of fifty days that is between them, which was in a manner accounted festival, and baptism administered during the whole time, as I have formerly noted. Besides these, Nazianzen[q] reckons the feast of Epiphany as an annual time of baptism, probably in memory either of the birth or baptism of our Saviour, both which anciently went under that title. This might be the custom in some places, but I question whether it was universal; besides that, afterwards it was prohibited and laid aside. But though persons in health, and the space that was requisite for the instruction of the catechumens, might well enough comport with these annual returns, yet if there was a necessity, (as in case of sickness and danger of death,) they might be baptized at any other time. For finding themselves at any time surprised with a dangerous or a mortal sickness, and not daring to pass into another world without this badge of their initiation into Christ, they presently signified their earnest desire to be baptized, which was accordingly done, as well as the circumstances of a sick bed would permit. These were called *clinici*, (of whom there is frequent mention in the ancient writers of the church,) because ἐν τῇ κλίνῃ βαπτιζόμενοι, "baptized

[o] Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 22.

[p] In Can. 45. Conc. Laod.

[q] Εἰς τὸ ἅγ. Βαπτ. Orat. xl. p. 654.

as they lay along in their beds." This was accounted a less solemn and perfect kind of baptism, partly because it was done, not by immersion, but by sprinkling; partly because persons were supposed at such a time to desire it, chiefly out of a fear of death, and many times when not thoroughly masters of their understandings. For which reason, persons so baptized (if they recovered) are by the fathers of the Neocæsarean council [r] rendered ordinarily incapable of being admitted to the degree of presbyters in the church. Indeed, it was very usual in those times, (notwithstanding that the fathers did solemnly and smartly declaim against it,) for persons to defer their being baptized till they were near their death, out of a kind of Novatian principle, that if they fell into sin after baptism, there would be no place for repentance, mistaking that place of the apostle, where it is said, that "if they who have been once enlightened (ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας, which the ancients generally understand of baptism) fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." For some such reason we may suppose it was that Constantine the Great deferred his baptism till he lay a dying; [s] the same which Socrates [t] relates of his son Constantius, baptized a little before his death. And the like he reports of the emperor Theodosius, who apprehending himself to be arrested with a mortal sickness, presently caused himself to be baptized,[u] though he recovered afterwards. To this custom of clinic baptism, some,[x] not improbably, think the apostle has reference in that famous place, where he speaks of those that are "baptized for the dead," ὑπὲρ νεκρῶν, which they expound with reference to the "state of the dead," and that it is meant of such who in danger of death would be baptized, that it might fare well with them after death. This Epiphanius [y] thinks the truest interpretation, that it is meant of catechumens; who being suddenly surprised with death, would be baptized, that so their sins being remitted in baptism, they might go hence under the hope of that eternal life which awaits good men after death, and testify their belief and expectation of their future happy resurrection. Others think it may refer to the place of baptism, those who are baptized ὑπὲρ νεκρῶν, "over the graves" or sepulchres of the

[r] Can. 12. [s] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 61, 62. [t] Hist. Eccl. l. ii. c. 47.
[u] Ibid. l. v. c. 6. [x] Vid. Voss. Thes. de Baptism. p. 161. et de Resur. Thes. 18.
[y] Hæres. xxviii. c. 6. Vid. Mat. Blast. Syntag. c. i. lit. B. p. 41.

dead, it being an ancient and general custom to have their religious meetings, and to perform their public exercises, at the tombs of martyrs; there being numerous instances in the Acts of the Martyrs,[z] of such as were baptized in the *cœmeteria* over the monuments of the dead. Whichsoever of these is most suitable, yet certainly either of them is far more probable than that which many talk so much of, as if the apostle meant it of a custom common in those primitive times amongst the Cerinthians,[a] and other heretics, where, when any died without baptism, they used to place another under his bed, who was baptized for him, in his stead, whence Tertullian[b] calls it a vicarious baptism; it being highly improbable that the great apostle would fetch an argument to confirm so solemn and fundamental a principle of the Christian faith, as the doctrine of the resurrection is, from such an absurd and ridiculous rite, used only by the worst of heretics. But this only by the way.

For the place where this solemn action was performed, it was at first unlimited: any place where there was water, as Justin Martyr tells us;[c] in ponds or lakes, at springs or rivers, as Tertullian speaks;[d] but always as near as might be to the place of their public assemblies, for it was seldom done without the presence of the congregation: and that for very good reason, both as it is a principal act of religious worship, and as it is the initiating of persons into the church; which therefore ought to be as public as it could, that so the whole congregation might be spectators and witnesses of that profession and engagement which the person baptized then took upon him; and this they so zealously kept to, that the Trullan council allows not baptism to be administered in a private chapel,[e] but only in the public churches, punishing the persons offending, if clergy with deposition, if laity with excommunication; which yet (as both Zonaras and Balsamon expound the canon) is to be understood, unless it be done with the leave and approbation of the bishop of the diocese. For this reason, they had afterwards their *baptisteria*, or (as we call them) fonts, built at first near the church, then in the church porch, to represent baptism being the entrance into the mystical church; afterwards they were placed in the church itself. They were usually very large and capacious, not

[z] Vid. Prud. Peristeph. hymn. viii. p. 110.
[a] Vid. Epiph. Hæres. xxviii. c. 6.
[b] De Resur. carn. c. 48.
[c] Apol. i. s. 61.
[d] De Bapt. c. 4.
[e] Can. 59.

only that they might comport with the general customs of those times of persons baptized, being immersed or put under water, but because the stated times of baptism returning so seldom, great multitudes were usually baptized at the same time. In the middle of the font there was a partition, the one part for men, the other for women, that to avoid offence and scandal they might be baptized asunder. Here it was that this great rite was commonly performed, though in cases of necessity they dispensed with private baptism; as in the case of those that were sick, or shut up in prison, of which there were frequent instances in times of persecution. Many there were in those days, (such especially as lived in the parts near unto it,) whom nothing would serve, unless they might be baptized in Jordan, out of a reverence to the place where our Saviour himself had been baptized; this, Constantine tells us,[f] he had a long time resolved upon, to be baptized in Jordan, though God cut him short of his desire. And Eusebius elsewhere relates,[g] that at Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John baptized, there was a place whither very many, even in his time, used to resort, earnestly desiring to obtain their baptism in that place. This doubtless proceeded from a very devout and pious mind, though otherwise one place can contribute nothing more than another; nothing being truer than what Tertullian has observed in this case,[h] "that it is no matter whether we be baptized amongst those whom John baptized in Jordan, or whom Peter baptized in Tiber."

The last circumstance I propounded concerns the manner of the celebration of this sacrament; and for this we may observe, that, in the apostles' age, baptism was administered with great nakedness and simplicity, probably without any more formality than a short prayer, and repeating the words of institution: and indeed it could not well be otherwise, considering the vast numbers that many times were then baptized at once. But after-ages added many rites, differing very often according to time and place: I shall not undertake to give an account of all, but only of the most remarkable, and such as did generally obtain in those times, keeping as near as I can to the order which they observed in the administration, which usually was thus: persons having passed through the state of the catechumens, and

[f] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 62.

[g] Euseb. de loc. Hebr. in voce Βηθααβαρὰ, p. 59.

[h] De Bapt. c. 4.

being now ripe for baptism, made it their request to the bishop that they might be baptized; whereupon, at the solemn times, they were brought to the entrance of the baptistry, or font, and standing with their faces towards the west,[i] (which being directly opposite to the east, the place of light, did symbolically represent the prince of darkness, whom they were to renounce and defy,) were commanded to stretch out their hand, as it were in defiance of him. In this posture they were interrogated by the bishop, concerning their breaking of all their former leagues and commerce with sin, and the powers of hell; the bishop asking,[j] "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, powers, and service?" To which the party answered, "I do renounce them." "Dost thou renounce the world, and all its pomps and pleasures?" Answer: "I do renounce them." This renunciation was made twice; once before the congregation, (probably at their obtaining leave to be baptized,) and presently after at the font, or place of baptism, as Tertullian witnesses.[k] Next, they made an open confession of their faith; the bishop asking,[l] "Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, &c., in Jesus Christ his only Son, who, &c.; dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, and in one baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and life everlasting?" To all which the person answered, "I do believe." This form of interrogation seems to have been very ancient in the church, and the apostle is justly thought to refer to it, when he styles baptism "the answer of a good conscience towards God," which can reasonably refer to nothing so well as that common custom of answering in baptism. These answers and actions in the adult were done by the persons themselves, in children by their *sponsores*, as Tertullian calls them,[m] their sureties and undertakers; for that both infants and adult persons had those that undertook for them at their baptism, is so notoriously known, that it were impertinent to insist upon it. After this there was a kind of exorcism, and an insufflation or breathing in the face of the person baptized, (which St. Augustine calls a most ancient tradition of the church,[n]) by which they signified the expelling of the evil spirit, and the breathing in the good

[i] Cyril. Hieros. Catech. myst. i. Vid. Dion. Areop. de Eccl. Hierarch. c. 2.
[j] Ambr. de Sacram. l. i. c. 2.
[k] De cor. mil. c. 3. De Spect. c. 13.
[l] Vid. Const. Apost. l. vii. c. 42.
[m] De Bapt. c. 18.
[n] De nupt. et concup. l. ii. c. 29.

Spirit of God: not that they thought that every one before baptism was possessed by the devil, but only that we are by nature children of wrath, enemies to God, and slaves to Satan. Nor did they lay any stress upon the bare usage of those symbolic rites, but wholly upon the church's prayers; which at the same time were made, that God would deliver those persons from the power of Satan, and by his Spirit unite them to the church. This being done, they were brought to the font, and were first stripped of their garments, (intimating thereby "their putting off the old man, which is corrupt, with his deceitful lusts;") and that all occasions of scandal and immodesty might be prevented in so sacred an action, the men and women (as I observed before[o]) were baptized in their distinct apartments; the women having deaconesses to attend them,[p] to undress and dress them, to stand about and overshadow them, that nothing of indecency might appear. Then followed the unction, a ceremony of early date, by which (says St. Cyril[q]) they signified that they were now cut off from the wild olive, and were ingrafted into Christ, the true olive-tree, and made partakers of his fruits and benefits; or else to shew that now they were become champions for Christ, and had entered upon a state of conflict, wherein they must strive and contend with all the snares and allurements of the world; as the *athletæ* of old were anointed against their solemn games, that they might be more expedite, and that their antagonists might take less hold upon them; or rather, probably, to denote their being admitted to the great privileges of Christianity: "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation," (as the apostle styles Christians,) offices of which anointing was an ancient symbol, both of being designed to them, and invested in them. And this account Tertullian favours, where, speaking of this unction in baptism, he tells us,[r] it is derived from the ancient, i. e. Jewish discipline, where the priests were wont to be anointed for the priesthood: for some such purpose they thought it fit that a Christian (who carries unction in his very name) should be anointed as a spiritual king and priest, and that no time was more proper for it than at his baptism, when the name of Christian was conferred upon him. Together

[o] Const. Apost. l. iii. c. 15. l. vii. c. 23. Epiph. Hæres. lxxix. c. 3.
[p] Catech. ii. [q] Ambr. de Sacr. l. i. c. 2. Vid. Dion. Areop. de Eccl. Hier. c. 2.
[r] De Bapt. c. 7.

with this, we may suppose it was, that the sign of the cross was made upon the forehead of the party baptized. When this ceremony first began to be used in baptism, I find not: St. Basil[s] reckons it (and he puts it too in the first place) amongst those ancient customs of the church that had been derived from the times of the apostles. That it was generally in use in the times of Tertullian[t] and Cyprian,[v] we have sufficient evidence from their writings; and, indeed, cannot reasonably suppose they should omit it in this solemn action, (where it is so proper,) when they used it in the commonest actions of ther lives; Tertullian expressly assuring us,[u] "that upon every motion, at their going out and coming in, at their going to bath, or to bed, or to meals, or whatever their employment or occasions called them to, they were wont *frontem signaculo terere*, 'to make the sign of the cross upon their forehead:'" and this they did, (as he there tells us,) not that it was imposed upon them by any law of Christ, but brought in by a pious custom, as that which did very much tend to strengthen and increase their faith. By this they shewed "that they were not ashamed of the cross of Christ," nor unwilling to engage in the service of a crucified Master, which yet was so great a scandal to the heathen world, and therefore they so often triumphed in this symbol and representation of it. Thus St. Jerome,[x] though he lived in a time when Christianity had almost quite prevailed over all other religions in the world, yet counted this the great matter of his glory; "that I am (says he) a Christian, that I was born of Christian parents, and do carry in my forehead the banner of the cross." And indeed so great a respect did they bear to this representation of our Saviour's death, that (though they did not worship the cross, yet) they took care that it should not be put to any mean and trivial uses, be painted or made upon the ground, or engraven upon marble pavements, or any thing where it might be trampled upon; as is expressly provided by a law of Theodosius and Valentinian.[y]

The action having proceeded thus far, the party to be baptized

[s] De Spir. Sanct. c. 27. [t] Vid. Tert. adv. Marcion. l. iii. s. 47.

[v] Cyp. de laps. p. 122. Frons cum signo, etc. De unit. Eccl. p. 116. Ea parte corporis, etc. ad Demet. p. 193. renati, et signo Christi signati, etc.

[u] De cor. mil. c. 3. Vid. Cyril. ad Illum. Catech. iv.

[x] Præf. in Joh. [y] Lib. i. Cod. Justin. tit. viii. l. unic.

was wholly immerged, or put under water, which was the almost constant and universal custom of those times, whereby they did more notably and significantly express the three great ends and effects of baptism; for as in immersion there are, in a manner, three several acts, the putting the person into water, his abiding there for a little time, and his rising up again, so by these were represented Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and in conformity thereunto, our dying unto sin, the destruction of its power, and our resurrection to a new course of life: by the persons being put into water was lively represented the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and being washed from the filth and pollution of them: by his abode under it, which was a kind of burial in the water, his entering into a state of death or mortification, like as Christ remained for some time under the state or power of death; therefore "as many as are baptized into Christ," are said "to be baptized into his death, and to be buried with him by baptism into death, that the old man being crucified with him, the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth he might not serve sin, for that he that is dead is freed from sin," as the apostle clearly explains the meaning of this rite: and then by his emersion, or rising up out of the water, was signified his entering upon a new course of life, differing from that which he lived before; "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." But though, by reason of the more eminent significancy of these things, immersion was the common practice in those days, and therefore they earnestly urged it and pleaded for it, yet did they not hold sprinkling to be unlawful, especially in cases of necessity, as of weakness, danger of death, or where conveniency of immerging could not be had; in these, and such like cases, Cyprian[z] does not only allow, but plead for it, and that in a discourse on purpose, when the question concerning it was put to him. Upon this account it is that immersion is now generally disused in these parts of the world, and sprinkling succeeded in its room, because the tender bodies of most infants (the only persons now baptized) could not be put under water in these cold northern climates without apparent prejudice to their health, if not their lives; and therefore in this, as in other cases, "God requires mercy

[z] Epist. lxix. ad Magn. p. 186.

rather than sacrifice," especially considering that the main ends of baptism are attained this way, and the mystical effects of it as truly, though not so plainly and significantly, represented by sprinkling, as by putting the body under water.

This immersion was performed thrice, the person baptized being three several times put under water; a custom which Basil[a] and Sozomen[b] will have derived from the apostles: it is certain that it was very early in the church, being twice mentioned by Tertullian[c] as the common practice. By this trine immersion they signified (say some[d]) their distinct adoring the three persons in the blessed Trinity, and therefore the custom was, in repeating the words of institution, at the naming of every person, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to plunge the party under water, as Tertullian tells us, and St. Ambrose more expressly. It was done (say others[e]) to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of our Saviour, together with his three days' continuance in the grave: St. Augustine[f] joins both these together, as the double mystery of this ancient rite, as he is cited by Gratian to this purpose. It cannot be denied, but that the ceremony is very significant and expressive, and accordingly the ancients laid great weight upon it, insomuch that the canons that go under the name of apostolical,[g] command him, whether bishop or presbyter, that baptizes any without the trine immersion, to be deposed from his ministry. But though this custom was, in a manner, universal, yet in some places (in after-times especially) it was otherwise; particularly in Spain, where they used it but once, lest they should gratify the Arians, who made use of the trine immersion to denote the persons in the Trinity to be three distinct substances, and gloried that the Catholics did and held the same with them. Upon this account they were content to immerge but once; and when differences and controversies did still remain about it, the fourth council of Toledo, out of a letter of Gregory the Great, thus determined the case: that they should still use their single immersion, and

[a] De Spir. Sanct. c. 27. [b] Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 26.

[c] Adv. Prax. c. 26. de Cor. mil. c. 3.

[d] Dion. Areop. Eccl. Hierarch. c. 2. Ibid. de Sacram. l. ii. c. 7.

[e] Athan. in dict. et interp. sap. quest. 93. Cyril. Catech. Myst. ii. Greg. Nyss. Orat. Catech. c. 35. vol. ii. p. 530.

[f] De consecrat. Distinct. iv. c. 78. [g] Can. 50.

that this would sufficiently express the mysteries of baptism; the diving under water would denote Christ's death and descending into hell, the coming out, his resurrection: the single immersion would express the unity of the Godhead; while the Trinity of persons would be sufficiently denoted by the persons being baptized "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The person baptized being come out of the water, was anointed the second time, as St. Cyril tells us;[h] and, indeed, whatever becomes of the unction that was before, it is certain that that which Tertullian[i] speaks of as a part of the ancient discipline, was after the person was baptized; which being done, he had a white garment put upon him,[k] to denote his having put off the lusts of the flesh, his being washed from the filth and defilement of his former sins, and his resolution to maintain a life of unspotted innocence and purity, according to that solemn and strict engagement which in baptism he had taken upon him. In this they alluded to that of the apostle, "that as many as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ;" i. e. have engaged in that strict and holy course of life, which he, both by his doctrine and example, has left to the world: accordingly, persons baptized are, both by the apostle and by the Greek fathers, frequently called φωτιζόμενοι, or "the enlightened," because they now professed that they were "become the children of the light and of the day," and would not return to "works of darkness" any more; and this, as they expected mercy from Christ at the great day; therefore the white garment was wont to be delivered to them with such a charge as this:[l] "receive the white and immaculate garment, and bring it forth without spot before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life. Amen." From the wearing of these white vestments, (as we have observed before,) Pentecost (which was one of the two annual times for baptism) came to be called Whitsunday, as also the Sunday after Easter, (which was the other time,) *Dominica in albis*, because then they laid this white robe aside; for it was the custom for persons baptized to wear this garment for a whole week after

[h] Cyril. Catech. iv.

[i] De Baptism. c. 7.

[k] Jobius apud Phot. Cod. ccxxii. c. 18. col. 597. Ambros. de iis qui myster. initiant. c. 7.

[l] Gregor. Sacramentar. inter Liturgic. Latinor. vol. ii. p. 269. vid. Eucholog. Græc. in offic. S. Baptism. p. 357.

they were baptized, and then to put it off, and lay it up in the church, that it might be kept as an evidence against them, if they violated or denied that faith which they had owned in baptism: whereof we have a memorable instance under the Arian persecution in Africa. Elpidophorus,[m] a citizen of Carthage, had lived a long time in the communion of the church, but apostatizing afterwards to the Arians, became a most bitter and implacable persecutor of the orthodox party. Amongst others whom he summoned to be put to the rack, was one Miritas, a venerable old deacon, (who had been the undertaker for him at his baptism,) who being ready to be put upon the rack, plucked out the white vestment wherewith Elpidophorus had been clothed at his baptism, and with tears in his eyes thus openly bespake him before all the people: "These, Elpidophorus, thou minister of error, these are the garments that shall accuse thee when thou shalt appear before the majesty of the great Judge; these I will diligently keep as a testimony of that ruin that shall depress thee down into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; these are they that were girt upon thee, when thou camest pure out of the holy font; and these are they that shall bitterly pursue thee when thou shalt be cast into the place of flames; because thou hast clothed thyself with cursing, as with a garment, and hast cast off the sacred obligation of thy baptism, and the true faith which thou didst then profess and take upon thee." These were the main and most considerable circumstances wherewith baptism was administered in the primitive church; some whereof were, by degrees, antiquated and disused: other rites there were that belonged only to particular churches, and which, as they were suddenly taken up, so were as quickly laid aside; others were added in after-times, till they increased so fast, that the usage and the number of them became absurd and burdensome, as may appear by the office for baptism in the Romish ritual at this day.

As a conclusion to this chapter, I had once thought to have treated concerning confirmation, which ever was a constant appendage to baptism, and had noted something to that purpose; but shall supersede that labour, finding it so often and so fully done by others in just discourses,[n] that nothing considerable can

[m] Victor. Utic. de persecut. Vand. l. iv. c. 9.

[n] Bishop Taylor, Dr. Hammond, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Hanmer, Mr. Daille.

be added to them; only I shall give this brief and general account of it: all persons baptized in the ancient church (according to their age and capacity, persons adult, some little time after baptism; children, when arrived to years of competent ripeness and maturity) were brought to the bishop, there further to confirm and ratify that compact which they had made with God in baptism, and by some solemn acts of his ministry, to be themselves confirmed and strengthened, by having the grace and blessing of God conferred upon them, to enable them to discharge that great promise and engagement which they had made to God. This was usually performed with the ceremony of unction, the person confirmed being anointed by the bishop, or in his absence by an inferior minister; and, indeed, unction was an ancient rite used in the Jewish church, to denote the conferring of gifts or graces upon persons, and thence, probably, amongst other reasons, (as many other usages were,) might be derived into the Christian church; though a learned man[o] is of opinion, that unction was never used in confirmation, but where the person being, in case of necessity, baptized by some of the inferior clergy, had not been before anointed; otherwise those who had received complete baptism, were not afterwards anointed at their confirmation, for which the council of Orange[p] is most express and clear. And, indeed, that confirmation was often administered without this unction, no man can doubt that knows the state of those times, being done only by solemn imposition of the bishop's hands, and by devout and pious prayers, that the persons confirmed might "grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ," and be enabled to perform those vows and purposes, and that profession of faith, which they had before embraced in baptism, and then again owned before the whole congregation. Till this was done they were not accounted complete Christians, nor admitted to the holy communion, nor could challenge any actual right to those great privileges of Christianity; whence it is that the ancients so often speak of confirmation, as that which did perfect and consummate Christians, as being a means to confer greater measures of that grace that was but begun in baptism; upon all which accounts, and almost exactly according to the primitive usage, it is still retained and practised in our own church at this day: and happy were it for

[o] Hen. Vales. Annot. in Euseb. Hist. Eccl. p. 135. col. 1.

[p] Can. 1.

us, were it kept up in its due power and vigour; sure I am, it is too plain that many of our unhappy breaches and controversies in religion do (if not wholly, in a great measure) owe their birth and rise to the neglect and contempt of this excellent usage of the church.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF IT IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

The persons dispensing this ordinance, who. The persons communicating, the baptized or the faithful. Suspension from this ordinance according to the nature of the offence. The eucharist sent home to them that could not be present. The case of Serapion. A custom in some places to give the sacrament to persons when dead, if they died before they could receive it, and why. The eucharist kept by persons at home. Sent abroad. This laid aside, and in its stead *eulogiæ*, or pieces of consecrated bread, sent from one church to another as tokens of communion. The time of its administration; sometimes in the morning, sometimes at night. Varied according to the peace they enjoyed. How oft they received the eucharist. At first every day. This continued in Cyprian's time, four times a week. Afterwards less frequented. The usual place of receiving, the church. Ordinarily not lawful to consecrate it elsewhere. Oblations made by persons before their communicating. Their *agapæ*, or love-feasts, what. Whether before or after the sacrament. How long continued in the church. The manner of celebrating this sacrament, collected out of the most ancient authors. The holy kiss. The general prayer for the church and the whole world. The consecration of the sacrament. The form of it out of St. Ambrose. The bread, common bread. The sacramental wine mixed with water. This no necessary part of the institution. Why probably used in those countries. The posture of receiving, not always the same. Singing psalms during the time of celebration. Followed with prayer and thanksgiving. The whole action concluded with the kiss of peace.

The holy eucharist, or supper of our Lord, being a rite so solemnly instituted, and of such great importance in the Christian religion, had place accordingly amongst the ancients in their public offices and devotions. In speaking to which, I shall much-what observe the same method I did in treating concerning baptism, considering the persons, the time, the place, and the manner of its celebration. The persons administering were the ordinary pastors and governors of the church, those who were set apart for the ministration of holy offices: the institution was begun by our Lord himself, and the administration of it by him committed to his apostles, and to their ordinary

successors, to the end of the world. We find in Tertullian,[q] that they never received it from any but the hand of the president, which must either be meant of the particular custom of that church where he lived, or of consecration only; for otherwise the custom was, when the bishop or president had, by solemn prayers and blessings, consecrated the sacramental elements, for the deacons to distribute them to the people, as well to those that were absent as to them that were present, as Justin Martyr expressly affirms,[r] and as the custom generally was afterwards. For the persons communicating at this sacrament, at first the whole church, or body of Christians, within such a space, that had embraced the doctrine of the gospel, and been baptized into the faith of Christ, used constantly to meet together at the Lord's table. As Christians multiplied, and a more exact discipline became necessary, none were admitted to this ordinance till they had arrived at the degree of the faithful; for whoever were in the state of catechumens, i. e. under instruction in order to their baptism, or by reason of any heinous crime under the censures and suspension of the church, and not yet passed through the several stages of the penitents, might not communicate, and were therefore commanded to depart the church, when the rest went to the celebration of the sacrament: for looking upon the Lord's supper as the highest and most solemn act of religion, they thought they could never take care enough in the dispensing of it; accordingly, whoever was found guilty of any scandalous fault, was, according to the nature of the offence, debarred the communion a shorter or a longer time, and sometimes all their life, not to be reconciled and taken into the communion of the church till they had continued their repentance to their death-bed. As for those persons that could not be present, either through distance of place, sickness, or any other just cause, the eucharist was wont to be sent home to them, some little pieces of the consecrated bread dipped in the sacramental cup, which were usually carried by the deacon, or some inferior officer of the church, or in cases of necessity by any other person: as in the case of Serapion, of whom Dionysius of Alexandria relates,[s] that having been all his life a good man, at last lapsed in a time of persecution, and though he oft desired reconciliation, yet none would communicate with him; not long

[q] De cor. mil. c. 3. [r] Apol. i. s. 67. [s] Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 44.

after, he was seized upon by a mortal sickness, deprived of the use of his speech and senses, but coming to himself after four days, he sends his nephew, a little boy, late at night, for one of the presbyters to come to him: the minister was at that time sick, but considering the exigence of the case, gives the boy a little piece of the eucharist, bids him to moisten it with a little water, and so give it him in his mouth, which he did, and immediately the old man cheerfully departed this life. For the better understanding of which, we are to observe, that those who had lapsed into idolatry, were to undergo a very long time of penance, and were not many times admitted to the communion, till they were near their death; and because it sometimes happened that they were overtaken with sudden death, before the sacrament could be administered to them, thence a custom sprung up to give it them after they were dead; which they did, doubtless, upon this ground, that they might give some kind of evidence that those persons died in the peace and communion of the church, though this usage was afterwards, by many councils, abrogated and laid aside.[t] I take no notice in this place of their giving the eucharist to new-baptized infants, the case being so commonly known and obvious. In those early times, nothing was more common than for Christians either to carry, or to have sent to them, some parts of the eucharist, which they kept in some decent place in their houses against all emergent occasions, especially to fortify and strengthen their faith in times of persecution, and to increase kindness and amity with one another; whence one, that was well versed in church-antiquities,[u] conjectures, that whenever they entertained friends or strangers, they used, before every meal, first to give them some parts of the holy eucharist, as being the greatest badge, the strongest band of true love and friendship in the world. Besides these parcels of the sacramental elements, there were wont, at the celebration of the communion, to be pieces of bread, (which remained of the offerings of the people,) which, being solemnly blessed by the bishop, might be given to those who had no right to be at the Lord's table, as to the catechumens, and such like, and were to them instead of the sacrament: these pieces were properly called *eulogiæ*, because set apart by solemn benediction, and were sent up and down the towns and villages round about, to testify and

[t] Vid. Conc. iii. Carth. Can. 6. Conc. vi. in Trull. Can. 83.

[u] Joh. Front. Epist. de φιλοτησίαις Veter. p. 6.

represent their mutual union and fellowship with one another; nay, and sometimes from churches in one country to those that were in another; which was also done by the eucharist itself: for so Irenæus,[x] in a letter to pope Victor, tells us, that the ministers of churches (though differing in some little circumstances) did yet use to send the eucharist to one another. Which custom is also taken notice of by Zonaras: but because the carrying the sacramental elements up and down the world, was thought not so well to consist with the reverence and veneration that is due to this solemn ordinance, therefore it was abolished by the Laodicean synod,[y] and these *eulogiæ*, or pieces of bread, appointed at Easter to be sent up and down in their room.

For the time, the next circumstance, when they met together for this solemn action, it was in general at their public assemblies, on the Lord's day always, or the first day of the week, as we find it in the history of the Apostles' Acts, besides other days, and especially Saturday; on which day all the churches in the world (those of Rome only and Alexandria excepted) used to celebrate this sacrament, as the historian informs us:[z] what time of the day they took to do it is not altogether so certain. Our blessed Saviour and his apostles celebrated at night, at the time of the Jewish passover; but whether the apostles and their immediate successors punctually observed this circumstance may be doubted: it is probable that the holy eucharist, which St. Paul speaks of in the church of Corinth, was solemnized in the morning, the apostles calling it a supper, (as Chrysostom thinks,[a]) not because it was done in the evening, but the more effectually to put them in mind of the time when our Lord did institute those holy mysteries. Tertullian assures us,[b] in his time it was done *in tempore victus*, about supper-time, (as all understand him,) and very often in the morning before day, when they held their religious assemblies; of which Pliny also takes notice in his letter to the emperor.[c] For in those times of persecution, when they were hunted out by the inquisitive malice of their enemies, they were glad of the remotest corners, the most unseasonable hours, when they could meet to perform the joint offices of religion. But this communicating at evening or at night either lasted only during the extreme heats of persecution, or at least wore off apace; for Cyprian expressly pleads

[x] Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 23. [y] Can. 14. [z] Socrat. l. iv. c. 22.
[a] In loc. [b] De cor. mil. c. 3. [c] Lib. x. ep. 97.

against it,[d] affirming that it ought to be in the morning; and so indeed in a short time it prevailed over most parts of the world, except in some places of Egypt near Alexandria, of which Socrates tells us,[e] that after they had sufficiently feasted themselves in the evening, they were wont to receive the sacrament. Under this circumstance of time we may take occasion to consider how oft in those days they usually met at this table. And at first, (while the spirit of Christianity was yet warm and vigorous, and the hearts of men passionately inflamed with the love of Christ,) it is more than probable they communicated every day, or as oft as they came together for public worship; insomuch, that the canons apostolical and the synod of Antioch threaten every one of the faithful with excommunication,[f] who came to church to hear the holy scriptures, but stay not to participate of the Lord's supper; the eye of their minds was then almost wholly fixed upon the memory of their crucified Saviour, and the oftener they fed at his table, the stronger and healthier they found themselves,[g] and the more able to encounter with those fierce oppositions that were made against them. This custom of receiving the sacrament every day continued some considerable time in the church, though in some places longer than in others; especially in the Western churches. From Cyprian we are fully assured it was so in his time:[h] "We receive the eucharist every day, (says he,) as the food that nourishes us to salvation." The like St. Ambrose seems to intimate of Milan,[i] whereof he was bishop; nay, and after him St. Jerome tells us,[k] it was the custom of the church of Rome; and St. Augustine seems pretty clearly to intimate,[l] that it was not unusual in his time. In the churches of the East this custom wore off sooner, though more or less according as the primitive zeal did abate and decay; St. Basil telling us,[m] that in his time they communicated four times a week, on the Lord's day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday; yea, and upon other days too, if the memory or festival of any martyr fell upon them. Afterwards, as the power of religion began more sensibly to decline, and the commonness of the thing

[d] Epist. lxiii. ad Cæcil. p. 156.
[e] Lib. iv. c. 22.
[f] Can. 9. Concil. Antioch. Can. 2.
[g] Vid. Ep. Cypr. lviii. ad Thabarit. circa init. p. 120.
[h] De Orat. Dom. p. 147.
[i] De Sacram. c. 4.
[k] Ad Jovinian.
[l] De Serm. Dom. in mont. l. ii. vol. iv. col. 1147. et ep. 118. ad Januar. c. 3.
[m] Basil. ep. xciii. ad Cæsar. Patric.

begat some contempt, (manna itself was slighted, after once it was rained down every day,) this sacrament was more rarely frequented; and from once a day, it came to once or twice a week; and then fell to once a month; and after, for the most part, to thrice a year, at the three great solemnities of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. To so great a coldness and indifferency did the piety and devotion of Christians grow, after once the true primitive temper and spirit of the gospel had left the world.

Concerning the third circumstance, the place where this holy supper was kept, much need not be said; it being a main part of their public worship, always performed in the place of their religious assemblies. It was instituted by our Saviour in a private house, because of its analogy to the Jewish passover, and because the necessity of that time would not otherwise admit. By the apostles, and Christians with them, it was celebrated in the houses of believers; generally in an upper room, set apart by the bounty of some Christian for the uses of the church, and which (as I have formerly proved) was the constant separate place of religious worship for all the Christians that dwelt thereabouts. Under the severities of great persecutions they were forced to fly to the mountains, or to their *cryptæ*, or vaults under ground, and to celebrate the sacrament at the tombs of martyrs, and over the ashes of the dead. Churches growing up into some beauty and regularity, several parts of the divine office began to have several places assigned to them; the communion service being removed to the upper or east end of the church, and there performed upon a table of wood, which afterwards was changed into one of stone, and both of them not uncommonly, though metaphorically, by the fathers, styled altars; and the eucharist itself, in later times especially, "the sacrament of the altar." This place was called *θυσιαστήριον*, and was fenced in with rails, within which the clergy received the sacrament, as the laity did without. Here it was that they all used to meet at this heavenly banquet, for out of this place they allowed not the celebration of the sacrament, (a thing expressly forbidden by the Laodicean council,[n]) unless in cases of great necessity; and therefore it was one of the principal articles for which the synod of Gangra deposed Eustathius from his

[n] Can. 58.

bishopric,[o] that he kept private meetings, persuading some that were averse to the public assemblies of the church, that they might communicate and receive the sacrament at home.

We come last of all to consider the manner how the eucharist was celebrated in the ancient church; but before we describe that, we are to take notice that after the service of the catechumens, and before the beginning of that of the faithful, at which the eucharist was administered, the custom was to present their offerings, every one according to his ability bringing some gifts as the first-fruits of his increase,[p] which was by the minister laid upon the altar, or communion table; none of them then thinking it fit to appear before the Lord empty. And therefore St. Cyprian severely chides a rich widow of his time,[q] who came without giving any thing to the poor man's box, and did partake of their offerings without bringing any offering of her own. These oblations were designed to the uses of the church, for the maintenance of the ministry, and the relief of the poor; especially out of them were taken the bread and the wine for the sacramental elements: the bread being no other than common bread, such as served for their ordinary uses, there being then no notice taken of what has for so many hundred years, and still is to this day, fiercely disputed between the Greek and the Latin church, whether it ought to be leavened or unleavened bread. Out of these oblations also it is probable they took (at least sent provisions extraordinary) to furnish the common feast, which in those days they constantly had at the celebration of the sacrament, where the rich and the poor feasted together at the same table. These were called *agapæ*, or "love-feasts," (mentioned by St. Jude, and plainly enough intimated by St. Paul,) because hereat they testified and confirmed their mutual love and kindness, a thing never more proper than at the celebration of the Lord's supper; which is not only a seal of our peace with God, but a sign and a pledge of our communion and fellowship with one another. Whether this banquet was before or after the celebration of the eucharist, is not easy to determine: it is probable, that in the apostles' time, and the age after them, it was before it, in imitation of our Saviour's institution, who celebrated the sacrament after supper. And St. Paul, taxing the

[o] Socrat. l. ii. c. 43. et Conc. Gangr. Can. 5, 6.

[p] Irenæus adv. Hær. l. iv. c. 27. s. 2. Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 65.

[q] De oper. et eleemos. p. 203.

abuses of the church of Corinth, reproves them,[s] "that when they came together for the Lord's supper, they did not one tarry for another, but every one took his own supper;" i. e. that provision which he had brought from home for the common feast, which was devoured with great irregularity and excess; some eating and drinking all they brought, others (the poor especially that came late) having nothing left, one being hungry and another drunken. All this, it is plain, was done before the celebration of the eucharist, which was never administered till the whole church met together. That therefore which the apostle reproves and corrects, is their indecency and intemperance; commanding both rich and poor to wait for one another, and to eat this common meal together, that they might the more orderly and unanimously pass to the celebration of the Lord's supper. In after ages, this feast was not till the communion was over, when the congregation feasted together, and so departed; and so Chrysostom expressly tells us it was in his days:[t] besides, nothing is more obvious, than that it was customary in those times for persons to fast till they had received the communion. I know a very learned man is of opinion,[u] that these love-feasts were not kept at the same time with the celebration of the eucharist; but, besides that his arguments are not conclusive, the whole stream of learned writers runs full against him. These feasts continued for some ages, till great inconveniencies being found in them, they were prohibited to be kept in churches by the Laodicean synod,[x] and after that by the council of Carthage; which though but provincial or national councils, yet the decrees were afterwards ratified by the sixth Trullan council,[y] and the custom in a short time dwindled into nothing.

These things being premised, the sacramental elements prepared, and all things ready, they proceeded to the action itself, which (following for the main the account that is given us by St. Cyril of Jerusalem,[z] and taking in what we find in others) was usually managed after this manner.[a] First, the deacon brought water to the bishop and the presbyters that stood round about the table to wash their hands, signifying the purity that ought to be in those that draw nigh to God,[b] according to that

[s] Vid. 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21. 33.
[t] Hom. xxvii. s. 3. in 1 ad Cor.
[u] Albasp. de rit. Eccl. l. i. obs. 18. p. 135. ed. 1623.
[x] Can. 28.
[y] Can. 74.
[z] Catech. myst. v.
[a] Cyril. ibid.
[b] Const. Apost. l. viii. c. 11.

of the psalmist, "I will wash mine hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." Then the deacon cried out aloud, "Mutually embrace and kiss one another." This holy kiss was very ancient, commonly used in the apostles' times, and in the succeeding ages of the church,[c] but especially at the sacrament, as a sign of the unfeigned reconciliation of their minds, and that all injuries and offences were blotted out, according to our Lord's command, "When thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." This being done, they fell to prayer, the whole congregation praying together with the minister, (which therefore Justin Martyr[d] calls the Common Prayer, the form whereof in the Apostolical Constitutions[e] is described at large,) for the universal peace and welfare of the church, for the tranquillity and quietness of the world, for the prosperity of the age, for wholesome weather and fruitful seasons, for all sorts of persons, for kings and emperors, and all in authority, for soldiers and armies, for believers and unbelievers, for friends and companions, for the sick and distressed, and, in short, for all that stood in need of help.[g] This general prayer is frequently mentioned by the ancient fathers,[h] as that which was at the beginning of the communion service; though St. Cyril place it a little later, as doubtless it was in his time. After this, followed the mutual salutation of the minister and people; the minister saying, "The Lord be with you;" to whom the people answered, "And with thy spirit." The minister cried, "Lift up your hearts," (nothing being more suitable, says St. Cyril, at this time, than that we should shake off all worldly cares, and exalt our hearts to God in heaven;) the people truly assenting and yielding to it, answered, "We lift them up unto the Lord." The minister proceeded, "Let us give thanks unto the Lord," (for what more fit than thankfulness to God, and a high resentment of such favours and blessings;) to this the people returned, "It is meet and just so to do." Whereupon the minister proceeded

[c] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 65. [d] Ibid.

[e] Lib. viii. c. 10. Vid. Tert. Apol. c. 39. Aug. ep cxviii. Const. Apost. l. ii. c. 57.

[g] Cyril. ubi supra.

[h] Cyril. ibid. Chrys. in 1 ad Cor. c. ix. Hom. xxxvi. s. 2. 2 ad Cor. c. viii. Hom. xviii. s. 4. Cypr. de Orat. Dom. p. 152.

to the prayer of consecration, (the form whereof we have in the Apostolical Constitutions,[i]) wherein he expressed huge thankfulness to God for the death, resurrection, and ascension of his Son, for the shedding of his blood for us, and the celebration of it in this sacrament; for condescending to admit them to such mighty benefits, and praying for a closer unity to one another in the same mystical body;[k] concluding usually with the Lord's prayer, and the hearty and universal acclamation of Amen, by all that were present.[l] This done, the minister cried out, *Τὰ ἁγία τοῖς ἁγιοῖς*,[m] "Holy things belong to holy persons;" the people answering, "There is one holy, one Lord Jesus Christ." Then he exhorted them to a due participation of the holy mysteries, which Cyril[n] tells us was done by way of divine hymn, singing, "Come, taste, and see that the Lord is good."

After this, the bishop or presbyter took the sacramental elements, sanctified them by a solemn benediction. The form of consecration we have in St. Ambrose:[o] "Lord, make this oblation, now prepared for us, to become a reasonable and acceptable sacrifice; this, which is the figure of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who, the day before he suffered, took the bread in his sacred hands, looked up to heaven, giving thanks to thee, O Holy Father, Almighty and everlasting God, blessed it, and having broken it, gave it to his apostles and disciples, saying, Take, eat all of it, for this is my body which is broken for many. Likewise also after supper he took the cup, that very day before he suffered, looking up to heaven, giving thanks to thee, Holy Father, Almighty and everlasting God, and having blessed it, gave it to his apostles and disciples, saying, Take, and drink ye all of it, for this is my blood." After this, he first brake the bread, and delivering it to the deacon,[p] he distributed it to the communicants; and after that the cup, which was likewise delivered to them: for the custom of communicating under one kind only, as is used in the church of Rome, was then unknown unto the world, nay, and for above a thousand years after Christ. In some cases (it is true) they dipped the bread in the wine, as in the case of baptized infants, to whom they administered the eucharist in those primitive times, and to very

[i] Lib. vii. c. 26.
[k] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 65.
[l] Cyril. Catech. myst. v.
[m] Const. Apost. l. viii. c. 13.
[n] Cyril. Catech. myst. v.
[o] De Sacram. l. iv. c. 5.
[p] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 65.

weak dying persons, who would not otherwise have swallowed the bread: and that by this means they might keep the sacrament at home against all emergent occasions; and this probably might in time make the way easier for introducing the sacrament under the kind of bread only. Their sacramental wine was generally diluted and mixed with water, as is evident from Justin Martyr,[q] Irenæus,[r] Cyprian,[s] and others. Cyprian, in a long epistle, expressly pleads for it, as the only true and warrantable tradition, derived from Christ and his apostles, and endeavours to find out many mystical significations intended by it, and seems to intimate as if he had been peculiarly warned of God to observe it according to that manner:[t] an argument which that good man often produces as his warrant to knock down a controversy when other arguments were too weak to do it. But although it should be granted, that our Saviour did so use it in the institution of the supper, (the wines of those eastern countries being very strong and generous, and that our Saviour, as all sober and temperate persons, might probably abate its strength with water, of which, nevertheless, the history of the gospel is wholly silent,) yet this being a thing in itself indifferent and accidental, and no way necessary to the sacrament, could not be obligatory to the church, but might either be done or let alone. The posture wherein they received it was not always the same: the apostles, at the institution of it by our Saviour, received it (according to the custom of the Jews at meals at that time) lying along on their sides upon beds round about the table; how long this way of receiving lasted, I find not: in the time of Dionysius Alexandrinus, the custom was to stand at the Lord's table, as he intimates in a letter to pope Xystus;[u] other gestures being taken in, as the prudence and piety of the governors of the church judged most decent and comely for such a solemn action; the bread and wine were delivered into the hands of those that communicated, and not, as the superstition of after-ages brought in, injected or thrown into their mouths. Cyril tells us,[x] that in his time they used to stretch out their right hand, putting their left hand under it, either to prevent any of the sacramental bread from falling down, or, as some

[q] Apol. i. s. 65.
[r] Iren. l. iv. c. 57. l. v. c. 2.
[s] Epist. lxiii. ad Cæcil. p. 148.
[t] Ibid. p. 156.
[u] Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 9.
[x] Catech. myst. v.

would have it,[y] hereby to shadow out a kind of figure of a cross.

During the time of administration, which in populous congregations was no little time, they sung hymns and psalms, (the compiler of the Apostolical Constitutions particularly mentions the thirty-third psalm;[z]) which being done, the whole action was solemnly concluded with prayer and thanksgiving,[a] (the form whereof is likewise set down by the author of the Apostolical Constitutions,[b]) that God had thought them worthy to participate of such sacred mysteries: and the people being blessed by the bishop or the minister of the assembly, and having again saluted each other with a kiss of peace, as a testimony of their hearty love and kindness, (whence Tertullian[c] calls this kiss, *signaculum orationis*, "the seal of prayer,") the assembly broke up, and they returned to their own houses. This, for the main, was the order wherein the first Christians celebrated this holy sacrament; for though I do not pretend to set down every thing in that precise and punctual order wherein they were always done, (and how should I, when they often varied according to time and place?) yet I doubt not but whoever examines the usages of those times, will find that it is done as near as the nature of the thing would bear.

[y] Vid. Conc. vi. in Trull. Can. 101.

[z] Lib. viii. c. 13.

[a] Videsis Dion. Areop. de Eccl. Hierarch. c. 3.

[b] Lib. vii. c. 27. et l. viii. c. 15. Cyril. Catech. myst. v.

[c] De Orat. c. 14.

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY:

OR

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT CHRISTIANS

IN THE FIRST AGES OF THE GOSPEL.

PART II.

THE RELIGION OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS AS TO THOSE VIRTUES THAT RESPECT THEMSELVES.

CHAPTER I.

OF THEIR HUMILITY.

The second branch of religion comprehended under the notion of sobriety, and discovered in some great instances of it. The proper tendency of the Christian religion to beget humility. This divine temper eminently visible in the first Christians: made good out of their writings. The great humility and self-denial of Cyprian. What Nazianzen reports to this purpose of his own father. Their modest declining that just commendation that was due to them. Many who suffered refused the honourable title of martyrs. Nazianzen's vindication of them against the suggestions of Julian the Apostate. The singular meekness and condescension of Nebridius amidst all his honours and relations at court. Their stooping to the vilest offices, and for the meanest persons: dressing and ministering to the sick, washing the saints' feet, kissing the martyrs' chains. The remarkable humility of Placilla, the empress, and the lady Paula. An excellent discourse of Gregory Nyssen's against pride.

Next to piety towards God, succeeds that part of religion that immediately respects ourselves, expressed by the apostle under the general name of "sobriety," or the keeping ourselves within those bounds and measures which God has set us; virtues, for which the primitive Christians were no less renowned than for the other: amongst them I take notice of their humility, their contempt of the world, their temperance and sobriety, their

courage and constancy, and their exemplary patience under sufferings. To begin with the first.

Humility is a virtue that seems more proper to the gospel; for though philosophers now and then spake a few good words concerning it, yet it found no real entertainment in their lives, being generally *animalia gloriæ*, creatures puffed up with wind and emptiness, and that sacrificed only to their own praise and honour: whereas the doctrines of the gospel immediately tend to level all proud and swelling apprehensions, to plant the world with mildness and modesty, and to "clothe men with humility, and the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit: by these we are taught to dwell at home, and to converse more familiarly with ourselves, to be acquainted with our own deficiencies and imperfections, and rather to admire others than to advance ourselves: for the proper notion of humility lies in a low and mean estimation of ourselves, and an answerable carriage towards others, "not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think," nor being unwilling that other men should value us at the same rate. Now that this was the excellent spirit of primitive Christianity will appear, if we consider how earnestly they protested against all ambitious and vain-glorious designs, how cheerfully they condescended to the meanest offices and employments, how studiously they declined all advantages of applause and credit, how ready they were rather to give praise to others than to take it to themselves, "in honour preferring one another." St. Clemens highly commends his Corinthians,[a] that all of them were of an humble temper, in nothing given to vain-glory, subject unto others rather than subjecting others to themselves, ready to give rather than receive. Accordingly,[b] he exhorts them (especially after they were fallen into a little faction and disorder) still to be humble-minded, to lay aside all haughtiness and pride, foolishness and anger; and not to glory in wisdom, strength, or riches, but "let him that glories, glory in the Lord:"[c] and to follow the example of our Lord, the Sceptre of the majesty of God; who came not in the vain-boasting of arrogancy and pride, although able to do whatsoever he pleased, but in great meekness and humility of mind, appearing in the world without any "form or comeliness, or any beauty that he should be desired;" suffering himself "to be despised and rejected of men, who

[a] Epist. ad Corinth. s. 1. [b] Ibid. s. 13. [c] Ibid. s. 16.

esteemed him not, and hid, as it were, their faces from him; who counted himself a worm and no man, and was accordingly made a reproach of men, and the derision of the people; all they that saw him, laughing him to scorn, shooting out the lip, and shaking the head at him." Now, if our Lord himself was so humble-minded, what should we be, who are come under the yoke of his grace? This, and much more to the same purpose, has that venerable and apostolical man in that admirable epistle, wherein he does lively describe and recommend the meek and excellent spirit of the gospel.

Justin the Martyr treads in the very same steps: he tells us,[d] that we are to shun all sinister suspicions of others, and to be very careful what opinion we entertain of them: that we are to be of a meek and unpassionate mind, not envying the good esteem and respect which others have, nor ambitiously affecting, or putting ourselves forwards upon any service or employment:[e] that we are humbly to submit ourselves, not in words only, but in all our actions, so as that we may appear not to be impostors and dissemblers, but mild and undesigning persons; for whoever would govern his life aright must be modest and unpragmatical, not angry and contentious, but silently consider with himself what is best and fittest to be done: that we are to account others wise and prudent, and not to think ourselves the only discreet and understanding persons: that we must not despise their admonitions; but hearken to their counsels whenever they are just and true. When some in St. Cyprian's time[f] had made a noble and resolute confession of Christ in the face of the greatest danger, lest they should be exalted above measure in their own thoughts, he bids them remember, according to the discipline of the gospel, to be humble, and modest, and quiet, that they might preserve the honour of their name, and be as glorious in their actions as they had been in their words and confessions of Christ; that they should imitate their Lord, who was not more proud, but more humble, at the time of his passion, "washing his apostles' feet:" and follow the counsel and pattern of St. Paul, who in his greatest sufferings continued meek and humble, and did not arrogate any thing to himself, no, not after he had been honoured with a translation into paradise and the

[d] Epist. ad Zen. et Seren. s. 3.
[e] Ibid. s. 9.
[f] Epist. v. ad Presb. et Diac. p. 10.

third heavens. And great reason he had to press this with all possible vehemency at that time, lest Christians, by their turbulent and unquiet carriage, should provoke the heathen magistrate to greater severity against them: and, indeed, who could better do it than he, who was himself so eminent for humility? For though some schismatical persons (whose wildness and insolence he sought to restrain) endeavoured to insinuate that he was not so humble as became a man of his rank and order, and as were our Lord and his apostles; yet observe how he vindicates himself in a letter to Pupianus, the head of the party: "As for my humility, (says he,[g]) it is sufficiently known, not only to the brethren, but the Gentiles themselves do see and respect it, and thou thyself didst know and honour it, whilst thou wast yet in the church, and didst communicate with me: but which of us, I pray, is farthest from humility? I, who daily serve the brethren, and receive those who come unto the church with all joy and kindness; or thou, who makest thyself a bishop over thy bishop, and pretendest to be a judge appointed by God over him who is thy judge?" And, indeed, how far the good man was from any designs of greatness and domination appeared in this, that when the people had universally chosen him to be bishop,[h] he privately withdrew and retired himself, reckoning himself unworthy of so great and honourable an office, and giving way to others, whose age and experience rendered them (as he thought) much fitter for it: but the importunity of the people being heightened into a greater impatiency, and having found where he was, they beset the house, and blocked up all passages of escape till they had found him, and forced it upon him. And with no less humility did he behave himself in the discharge of it: when consulted by some of his clergy, what they should do in the case of the lapsed,[i] he answers, That being now alone, he could say nothing to it, for that he had determined from his first entering upon his bishopric not to adjudge any thing by his own private order, without the counsel of the clergy, and the consent of the people. So meanly did that wise and excellent man think of himself, and so much did he attribute to the judgment and concurrence of those that were below him.

Nazianzen[k] reports of his father, (a bishop too,) that amongst

[g] Epist. lxvi. p. 166.
[h] Pont. Diac. in vit. Cyprian. p. 3.
[i] Epist. v. ad Presb. et Diac. p. 10.
[k] Orat. xix. in laud. Patr. p. 300.

other virtues, he was peculiarly remarkable for humility; which he did not express, philosopher-like, in little arts of external modes and carriage, putting on a feigned behaviour, like women, who having no natural beauty of their own, fly to the additionals of dresses and paintings, δι' εὐσχημοσύνην ἀσχήμονες, becoming more deformed by their ascititious beauty. His humility consisted not in his dress, but in the constancy of his mind; not in the hanging down of his head, or the softness of his tone, or the demureness of his look, or the gravity of his beard, or the shaving of his head, [the cropping of his hair,] or the manner of his gait, but in the frame and temper of his soul, being as humble in his mind, as he was sublime and excellent in his life; and when no man could arrive at the perfection of his virtues, yet every one was admitted to a freedom of converse with him. Both in his garb and diet, he equally avoided pomp and sordidness; and though a great restrainer of his appetite, would yet seem not to do it, lest he should be thought plainly to design glory to himself by being needlessly singular above other men. How industriously do we find them many times disowning that deserved praise and commendation that was due to them? How modestly does Justin Martyr[l] decline his adversary's commendation of the acuteness and elegancy of his reasonings? resolving all into the grace of God, that enabled him to understand and expound the scriptures, of which grace he there persuades all men freely and fully to become partakers with him. Of the confessors in the time of the persecution under M. Aurelius, Eusebius,[m] out of the relation which the churches of Vienna and Lyons in France sent to the churches in Asia, tells us, that although they had often borne witness to the truth at the dearest rate of any thing on this side death, though they had been frequently thrown to wild beasts, exposed to the fire, and the remains of wounds and violence were visible in all parts of their bodies, yet, in imitation of the great humility of the Son of God, they would not, after all this, (which yet was not uncommon in those times,) either call themselves martyrs, or suffer others to call them so: but if any of the brethren, either by letter or discourse, had saluted them by that title, they would severely reprove and check them for it; acknowledging themselves at best but vile and despicable confessors, and with tears begging of the brethren to be instant

[l] Dial. cum Tryph. s. 58.

[m] Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 2.

with God by prayer, that they might perfect all by a real martyrdom. Hence it was, that when Julian the Apostate refused to proceed against the Christians by open persecution, as his predecessors had done, because he envied them the honour of being martyrs, Nazianzen answers,[n] that he was greatly mistaken, if he supposed they suffered all this, rather out of a desire of glory, than a love of truth: such a foolish and vain-glorious humour might indeed be found amongst his philosophers and the best of his party, many of whom have put themselves upon strange attempts, merely to gain the honour of a name, and the reputation of divinity; but for Christians, they had rather die in the cause of religion, although no man should ever know of it, than to live and flourish amongst others with the greatest honour and esteem; "it being our great solicitude not to please men, but only to obtain honour from God: nay, some of us (says he) arrive to that heroic pitch, as to desire an intimate union unto God, merely for himself, and not for the honours and rewards that are laid up for us in the other world." Memorable the humility of the great Constantine,[o] that when all men's mouths were filled with the honourable mention of his virtues, and one took upon him to praise him to his face, telling him how happy he was whom God had thought worthy of so great an empire in this world, and for whom he reserved a much better kingdom in the next; he was highly offended with the address, and advised the man, that he should not presume to talk so any more; but rather turn his praises of him into prayers to God for him, that both here and hereafter he might be thought worthy to be numbered amongst the servants of God.

I cannot but take notice of what St. Jerome[p] reports of Nebridius, a young Roman gentleman, cousin-german to the empress, by whom he was brought up in the palace, playfellow and companion to the young emperors, (to whom he was very dear,) trained up with them in the same studies and arts of education; that notwithstanding all this, and that he was then in the prime and vigour of his youth, yet he was neither debauched by intemperance amidst the delicacies and pleasures of the court, nor swelled with pride, reflecting upon others with a surly look, but rendered himself amiable unto all. The princes he loved as

[n] Orat. iii. in Julian. i. p. 73.

[o] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. iv. c. 48.

[p] Ad Salvinam Nebridii viduam, de viduit. servand.

brethren, and revered as lords: their attendants and ministers, and all the orders of the palace, he had so endeared by kindness and condescension, that they who were so much below him, did, in a manner, think themselves equal to him.

I shall give but one instance more of the humility of those times; and that is, their ready condescending to any office or employment, though never so mean, about the poorest Christian: they thought it not below them to cook and provide victuals for them, to visit the imprisoned, to kiss their chains, to dress their wounds, to wash their feet. And in this our Lord himself went before them, when, a little before his death, he rose from table, girt himself, washed and wiped his disciples' feet, and then told them what influence this ought to have upon them; "that if their Lord and Master had washed their feet, they ought also to wash one another's feet, for that he had given them an example, that they should do as he had done to them;" and good reason, "the servant not being greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." Accordingly we find this particular act of Christian condescension frequently used in the primitive church. St. Paul[q] expressly requires it as a qualification in a widow, that was to be taken in as a deaconess into the church, that she be "one that has used to lodge strangers, and to wash the saints' feet." Tertullian[r] assures us it was usually done by Christians in his time, to go into the prisons to kiss and embrace the martyrs' chains, to harbour and provide for indigent brethren, and to bring water to wash the saints' feet: no office so low which they were not content to stoop to.

When Placilla the empress[s] was checked by some of the court for her mighty condescension in visiting the hospitals, and curing the lame and the sick with her own hands, preparing and giving them their provisions, as a thing too much below her state and grandeur; she answered, that to distribute gold became the emperor; but for her part, she thought herself obliged to do this for God, who had advanced her to that honour and dignity: often instilling this pious counsel into her husband, "It becomes you, sir, always to remember what you once were, and what you now are: by which means you will shew yourself not to be ungrateful to your great Benefactor, and will govern the

[q] 1 Tim. v. 10.
[r] Ad uxor. l. ii. c. 4.
[s] Theodor. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 18.

empire committed to you justly and lawfully, and to the honour of him that gave it."

St. Jerome,[t] reckoning up the virtues of Paula, a lady of the greatest descent and nobility in Rome, but devoting herself afterwards to the solitudes of a religious life, tells us of her, that for humility, (the prime and chief virtue of Christians,) she carried herself with so much lowliness, that whoever had seen and not known her, could not but have mistaken her for the meanest of the maids that waited on her. Whenever she appeared in the midst of those devout and pious virgins that dwelt with her, she always seemed, both in clothes and voice, and garb and gait, the least and most contemptible of all the rest. So studious was the piety of those days to keep the lustre of their own perfections from sparkling in their eyes, and not fondly to admire the glimmerings of their own light; being so far from falsely arrogating to themselves those excellencies which they had not, that they industriously concealed those excellent perfections which they had.

I cannot better conclude this chapter, than with the excellent reasonings of St. Gregory of Nyssa,[u] against priding a man's self in any external ornaments or advantages, where he thus entertains the proud man: "He that looks to himself, and not to the things that are about him, will see little reason to be proud: for what is man? Say the best of him, and that which may add the greatest honour and veneration to him, that he is born of nobles; and yet he that adorns his descent, and speaks highliest of the splendour and nobility of his house, does but derive his pedigree from the dirt: and to inquire more narrowly into the manner of his being born into the world common with other men, were to uncover what shame and modesty require should be concealed in the profoundest silence. And dost thou not blush, thou statue of earth, who art shortly to be crumbled into dust; who, bubble-like containest within thee a short-lived humour? dost thou not blush, to swell with pride and arrogance, and to have thy mind stuffed with vain idle thoughts? Hast thou no regard to the double term of man's life, how it begun, and where it will end? Thou pridest thyself in thy juvenile age, and flatterest thyself in the flower, the beauty, and sprightliness of thy youth,

[t] Epitaph. Paulæ ad Eustoch. filiam.

[u] De beatitudinib. Orat. i. vol. i. p. 768.

that thy hands are ready for action, and thy feet apt to dance nimble measures; that thy locks are waved by the wanton motions of the wind, and a soft down overgrows thy cheeks; that thy purple robes put the very roses to the blush, and thy silken vestures are variegated with rich embroidery of battles, huntings, or pieces of ancient history; or brought down to the feet, artificially set off with black, and curiously made fast with strings and buttons. These are the things thou lookest at, without any regard to thyself. But let me a little, as in a glass, shew thee thy own face, who and what thou art: hast thou not seen in a public charnel-house the unveiled mysteries of human nature; bones rudely thrown upon heaps; naked skulls, with hollow eye-holes, yielding a dreadful and deformed spectacle? Hast thou not beheld their grinning mouths, and ghastly looks, and the rest of their members carelessly dispersed and scattered? If thou hast beheld such sights as these, in them thou hast seen thyself. Where then will be the signs of thy present beauty, that good complexion that adorns thy cheeks, and the colour of thy lips, that frightful majesty, and supercilious loftiness that once resided in thine eyes, or thy nose that once beautifully graced thy cheeks? Where are thy locks that were wont to reach thy shoulders, the curls that used to adorn thy temples? What are become of those arms that used to draw the bow, those legs that used to bestride thy horses? Where is the purple, the silken garments, the long robe, the belt, the spurs, the horse, the race, the noise, and prancings, and all the rest of those things that now add fuel to thy pride? Tell me, where then will those things be, upon the account whereof thou dost now so much boast and bear up thyself? Was there ever any dream so fond and inconstant, any thing more fantastic that ever appeared to a man asleep? What shadow was ever so thin, so incapable of being grasped within the hollow of the hand, as this dream of youth, which at once appears, and immediately vanishes away?" Thus the holy man treats the young vapouring gallant, and levels his pride with the sober considerations of mortality. In his following discourse he deals with persons of riper years, and such as are in places of authority and power, and shews how absurd and uncomely pride is in them: which it might not be impertinent to represent, but fearing to be tedious I forbear.

CHAPTER II.

OF THEIR HEAVENLY MINDEDNESS, AND CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD.

The soul rightfully constituted naturally tends upwards, especially when assisted with the aids of religion. The first Christians much above the world. Not wrought upon by temptations of advantage. They accounted it the greatest honour to be Christians. Contented with a very mean portion of outward things. The story of some of our Saviour's kindred brought before Domitian. The sect of the *apostolici* and *apotactici*, the fathers of the mendicant orders in the church of Rome. The little care which Christians then had of rich furniture and costly provisions. Their denying to go to public feasts and sports made for the pleasure of the people. This charged upon them by the heathens. The case of the woman that was seized upon by an evil spirit while she was at the theatre. Their cheerful parting with any worldly comforts, estates, relations, &c. A strange heroic speech of Melania at the loss of her husband and two sons, mentioned by St. Jerome. Eager for martyrdom, as what would presently send them to heaven. Their frequent supporting themselves under sufferings with discourses of the kingdom above. Thence accused as treasonable affectors of the empire. Their contempt of the world much promoted by the opinion, that the day of judgment was near at hand. Christians in the world like sojourners in a strange country.

The soul of man being heaven-born, cannot but partake of the nature and disposition of that country, and have a native inclination to that place from whence it borrows its original; and though it is true, in this corrupt and degenerate state, it is deeply sunk into matter, clogged and overborne with the earthly and sensual propensions of the lower appetites, the desires and designs of men creeping up and down, like shadows upon the surface of the earth; yet does it often, especially when assisted with the aids of religion, attempt its own rescue and release. The mind of a good man is acted by manly and generous impulses, it dwells in the contemplations of the upper region, tramples upon those little projects of profit or pleasure which ensnare and enslave other men, and makes all its designs subservient to the interests of a better country. A temper of mind never more triumphant in any than in the Christians of old, whose "conversations were in heaven," and whose spirits breathed in too free an air to be caught with the charms of the best enjoyments this world could afford: they looked upon the delights and advantages of this life as things not worthy to arrest their affections in their journey to a better. Justin Martyr,[x] dis-

[x] Dial. cum Tryph. s. 82.

coursing with Trypho the Jew, tells him, that they were careful, with all fear, to converse with men according to the scriptures, not greedily desiring to gain riches, or glory, or pleasure to themselves, concerning any of which, no man could lay any thing to their charge; and that they did not live like the great men of his people, of whom God himself has left this reproachful character, "That their princes were companions of thieves, every one loving gifts, and following after rewards."

Nay, Trypho himself bears them this testimony, though doubtless he intended it as a reproach to them, that having from a vain report chosen Christ to be their Master, they did for his sake foolishly undervalue and throw away all the enjoyments and advantages of this world. "Amongst us (says Tatian[y]) there is no affectation of vain-glory, no diversity of sentiments and opinions, but separating ourselves from all vulgar and earthly thoughts and discourses, and having given up ourselves to the commands of God to be governed by his law, we abandon whatever seems but akin to human glory." They never met with opportunities to have advantaged and enriched themselves, but they declined and turned them off with a noble scorn. When Abgarus, the toparch of Edessa, offered Thaddeus[z] (one of the seventy disciples) great sums of gold and silver for the pains he had taken, and the great things he had done amongst them, he refused them with this answer: "To what purpose should we receive good things from others, who have freely forsaken and renounced our own?" As indeed, in those times, friends and relations, houses and lands, were cheerfully parted with, when they stood in competition with Christ; they could content themselves with the most naked poverty, so it might but consist with the profession of the gospel.

When Quintianus, the president under Decius the emperor, asked Agatha, the virgin-martyr,[a] why, being descended of such rich and illustrious parents, she would stoop to such low and mean offices as she took upon her? she presently answered him, "Our glory and nobility lies in this, that we are the servants of Christ." To the same purpose was the answer of Quintinus the martyr, under the Dioclesian persecution, when the president asked him, how it came about, that he, being a Roman citizen, and

[y] Orat. cont. Græcos, s. 32.

[z] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 15.

[a] Martyr. ejus apud Sur. ad diem 5 Feb. vol. i. ex S. Metaph.

the son of a senator, would truckle under such a superstition, and worship him for a God whom the Jews had crucified ?[b] The martyr told him, that it was the highest honour and nobility to know and serve God: that the Christian religion, which he called superstition, ought not to be traduced with so base a name, seeing it immediately guided its followers to the highest degrees of happiness; for herein it is that the omnipotent God is revealed, the great Creator of heaven and earth, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom all things were made, and who is in all things equal to his Father.

The simplicity of Christians then kept them from aspiring after honour and greatness, and if at any time advanced to it, their great care was to "keep themselves unspotted from the world;" as Nazianzen reports of his brother Cæsarius,[c] chief physician to the emperor Constantius, that though he was very dear to him, (as he was to the whole court,) and advanced by him every day to greater honours and dignities, "yet this (says he) was the chief of all, that he suffered not the nobility of his soul to be corrupted by that glory and those delights that were round about him: but accounted this his chiefest honour, that he was a Christian; in comparison of which all things else were to him but as a sport and pageantry: he looked upon other things but as comic scenes, soon up, and as soon over; but upon piety, as the most safe and permanent good, and which we can properly call our own, regarding that piety especially which is most inward and unseen to the world."

The like he relates of his sister Gorgonia,[d] as the perfection of her excellent temper, that she did not more seem to be good, than she did really strive to be so; peculiarly conversant in those secret acts of piety which are visible only to him, who sees what is hidden and secret: to the prince of this world she left nothing, transferring all into those safe and celestial treasuries that are above; she left nothing to the earth but her body, changing all things for the hopes of a better life; bequeathing no other riches to her children, but an excellent pattern, and a desire to follow her example. The truth is, as to estate, they were not concerned for more than what would supply the necessities of nature, or the wants of others, not solicitous to get or

[b] Apud Sur. ad 31 Oct. com. 5.

[c] In laud. Cæsar. frat. Orat. x. p. 166.

[d] In laud. Gorgon. Orat. xi. p. 183.

possess such revenues as might make them the objects either of men's envy or their fear; as may appear amongst others by this instance.

Domitian, the emperor,[e] being informed that there were yet remaining some of Christ's kindred according to the flesh, (the nephews of Judas, the brother of our Lord, of the race and posterity of David, which the emperor sought utterly to extirpate,) he sent for them, inquired of them whether they were of the line of David? They answered, they were. He asked, what possessions and estate they had? They told him they had between them thirty-nine acres of land, (to the value of about nine thousand pence,) out of the fruits whereof they both paid him tribute, and maintained themselves with their own hard labour, whereto the hardness and callousness of their hands (which they then shewed him) bore witness. He then asked them concerning Christ and the state of his kingdom; to which they answered, that his empire was not of this world, but heavenly and evangelical, and which should finally take place in the end of the world, when he should come "with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, and to reward men according to their works:" which when he heard, despising the men upon the account of their meanness, he let them go, without any severity against them. Of Origen we read,[f] that he was so great a despiser of the world, that when he might have lived upon the maintenance of others, he would not, but parted with his library of books to one that was to allow him only four *oboli* a day; the day he spent in laborious tasks and exercises, and the greatest part of the night in study; he always remembered that precept of our Saviour, "not to have two coats, not to wear shoes, not anxiously to take care for to-morrow;" nor would he accept the kindness of others, when they would freely have given him some part of their estate to live on.

Not that the Christians of those times thought it unlawful to possess estates, or to use the blessings of divine providence; for though in those times of persecution they were often forced to quit their estates and habitations, yet did they preserve their proprieties entire, and industriously mind the necessary conveniencies of this life, so far as was consistent with their care of a better. There were indeed a sort of Christians called *apostolici*,

[e] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 20.

[f] Ibid. l. vi. c. 3.

who, in a fond imitation of the apostles, left all they had, and gave up themselves to a voluntary poverty, holding it not lawful to possess any thing: hence they were also called *apotactici*, or "renouncers," because they quitted and renounced whatsoever they had; but they were ever accounted infamous heretics. They were, as Epiphanius tells us,[g] the descendants of Tatian, part of the old *Cathari* and *Encratitæ:* together with whom they are put in a law of the emperor Theodosius, and reckoned amongst the vilest of the Manichæan heretics: mentioned also by Julian the Apostate,[h] as a branch of the Galileans, as he calls the Christians, by him compared to the cynic philosophers amongst the heathens, for the neglecting of their country, the abandoning of their estates and goods, and their loose and rambling course of life; only herein different, that they did not, as those Galilean *apotactistæ*, run up and down under a pretence of poverty to beg alms. The truth is, by the account which both he and Epiphanius give of them, they seem to have been the very patriarchs and primitive founders of those mendicant orders, and professors of vowed poverty, which swarm so much in the church of Rome at this day. But to return. The Christians of those days did not study those arts of splendour and gallantry which have since overrun the world; stately palaces, costly furniture, rich hangings, fine tables, curious beds, vessels of gold and silver, the very possession of which (as Clemens Alexandrinus speaks[i]) creates envy; they are rare to get, hard to keep, and, it may be, not so accommodate to use. "Will not a knife cut as well, (says he,) though it have not an ivory haft, or be not garnished with silver? or an earthen bason serve to wash the hands? Will not the table hold our provisions, unless its feet be made of ivory? or the lamp give its light, although made by a potter, as well as if it were the work of the goldsmith? May not a man sleep as well upon a mean couch, as upon a bed of ivory? Upon a goat's skin, as well as upon a purple or Phœnician carpet? Our Lord ate his meat out of a common dish, and made his followers sit upon the grass, and washed his disciples' feet, without ever fetching down a silver bowl from heaven; he took the water which the Samaritaness had drawn in an earthern pitcher, not requiring one of gold, shewing

[g] Contr. Apostolic. Hæres. lxi. s. 1. Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. v. de Hæret. l. 7.

[h] De Synic. Sect. Orat. vii. p. 417.

[i] Pædag. l. ii. c. 3.

how easy it was to quench his thirst; for he respected the use, not the vain and superfluous state of things." This and much more he there urges to this excellent purpose, to let us see how little a Christian need be beholden to the world, if he be content with what is enough for the necessary uses of human life.

To this let me annex some part of that discourse which Gregory Nyssen has upon this subject:[k] "The fluid and transitory condition of man's life (says he) calls for a daily reparation of the decays of nature: he, therefore, that looks no farther than to minister to the desires of nature, and troubles not himself with vain anxious thoughts for more than is necessary, lives little less than the life of angels; whilst, by a mind content with little, he imitates their want of nothing. For this cause we are commanded to seek only what is enough to keep the body in its due state and temper, and thus to address our prayers to God: give us our daily bread: give us bread, not delicacies or riches; not splendid and purple vestures, or rich golden ornaments; not pearls and jewels, silver vessels, large fields and great possessions; not the government of armies, the conduct of wars, the disposal of nations; not numerous flocks and herds of cattle, or multitudes of slaves and servants; not splendour and gallantry in public; not marble pillars, or brazen statues, or silken carpets, or choirs of music, or any of those things by which the soul is diverted, and drawn from more noble and divine thoughts and cares: but only bread, which indeed is the true and common staff of man's life."

Nor were they more studious of pleasures and recreations abroad, than they were of fineness and bravery at home. They went not to public feasts, nor frequented the shows that were made for the disport and entertainment of the people: and this was so notorious, that the heathens charged it upon them as part of their crime. Observe how he in Minutius Felix draws it up:[l] "The Romans (says he) govern and enjoy the world, while you in the mean time are careful and mopish, abstaining even from lawful pleasures; you visit not the shows, nor are present at the pomps, nor frequent the public feasts; you abhor the holy games, the sacrificial meats and drinks, crown not your heads with garlands, nor perfume your bodies with sweet odours; a

[k] De Orat. Domin. orat. v. vol. i. p. 745. Vid. Cypr. de Orat. Dom. p. 147.

[l] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 12. Vid. Constit. Apost. l. ii. c. 62.

ghastly, fearful, and miserable people:" which by that time that Octavius the Christian comes to answer,[m] he grants it all to be true, and tells him there was very good reason why they should abstain from their shows, pomps, and divertisements, at which they could not be present without great sin and shame, without affronting their modesty, and offering a distaste and horror to their minds; and indeed they reckoned themselves particularly obliged to this by what they had vowed and undertaken at their baptism, when they solemnly engaged to "renounce the devil, and all his works, pomps, and pleasures;" i. e. (says St. Cyril[n]) the sights and sports of the theatre, and such like vanities. The truth is, they looked upon the public sports and pastimes of those days as the scenes not only of folly and lewdness, but of great impiety and idolatry; as places where the devil eminently ruled, and reckoned all his votaries that came thither. Accordingly Tertullian tells us of a Christian woman,[o] who going to the theatre, was there possessed by the devil; and when the evil spirit, at his casting out, was asked, how he durst set upon a Christian? he presently answered, "I did but what was fit and just, for I found her upon my own ground."

Being thus affected towards the world, they could very willingly part with any thing that was dearest to them, friends, estate, liberty, or life itself. "We are not moved (says one of their apologists[p]) with the loss of our estates which our enemies wrest from us, nor with the violence that is offered to our credit and reputation, or if there be any thing of greater concernment than these; for although these things are mightily prized and valued amongst men, yet can we despise and slight them: nay, we cannot only, when beaten, refrain from striking again, and make no resistance against those that invade and spoil us, but to them that 'smite one cheek we can turn the other, and to them that take away the coat we can let them take the cloak also.'" And I remember Nazianzen tells us,[q] that of those excellencies and endowments which God had given him, health, wealth, esteem, and eloquence, he reaped this only benefit, that he had something which he could contemn, and by which he could shew that he infinitely valued Christ before them. The greatest endearment of this life is relations, and yet these too they could

[m] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 37. [n] Cyril. Hieros. Catech. Myst. i.
[o] De Spectac. c. 26. [p] Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 1. [q] Orat. i. p. 32.

quietly resign when God called for them. Memorable it is what St. Jerome[r] reports of Melania, (a lady of great piety in his time, in whose commendation Paulinus,[s] bishop of Nola, spends a very large epistle, especially commending her for her generous and heroic mind, *tam viriliter Christiana*, that she was something above a woman, and had the masculine spirit of a Christian; of this lady, St. Jerome tells us,) that her husband lying dead by her, she lost two of her sons at the same time; and when every one expected that she should break out into a violent passion, tear her hair, rend her garments, and burst into tears, she stood still, and, at last, falling down, as it were at the feet of Christ, broke out into this pious and Christian resentment: "Lord, I shall serve thee more nimbly and readily, by being eased of the weight which thou hast taken from me." Nay, so little kindness had they for this world, that they cared not how little they stayed in it, and therefore readily offered themselves to martyrdom at every turn. Tertullian[t] tells his adversaries, that all those plagues which God sent upon the world, what damage soever they might do their enemies, could not hurt them, because they had no other concernment in this world, than as soon as they could to get out of it. This, he elsewhere tells us,[u] the very Gentiles assigned as one reason why the Christians were trained up in a defiance of all the sports and pleasures of this life, that they might be more willing to die; and that the cords being cut by which they were tethered to this world, they might be more nimble and expedite for their passage hence. Their main designs were intent upon the happiness of another world, and therefore they regarded not what they went through to come sooner to it. "Being inflamed (says Justin Martyr[x]) with the desire of a pure and an eternal life, we breathe after an intimate converse with God, the great Parent and Creator of the world, and make haste to seal our confession with our blood; being certainly persuaded that they shall attain to this state, who, by their actions, study to approve themselves to God, that they follow after him, and are heartily desirous of communion with him in that life, where no malice or wickedness shall take place." This was the mighty support they leaned upon, the great cordial with which they kept up their spirits in those sad times of suffering and persecu-

[r] Ad Paul.
[s] Epist. l. ii. ep. 2.
[t] Apol. c. 41.
[u] De Spectac. c. 1.
[x] Apol. i. s. 8.

tion, the firm belief and expectation which they had of enjoying God in a better life. They knew that the more haste their enemies made to break open the cage of their bodies, the sooner their souls would be at liberty to fly to the regions of blessedness and immortality. And indeed so much were their thoughts fixed upon this, so oft did they use to comfort one another by discoursing of that kingdom which they expected hereafter, that some of their enemies overhearing and mistaking them, accused them as treasonable affectors of the empire; when, alas, (as Justin Martyr assures the emperors,[y]) they meant nothing less: which they might know by this, that being brought to trial, they freely confessed themselves to be Christians, though they certainly knew they must die for it; "whereas (says he) did we expect a human kingdom, we would dissemble and deny it, and avoid death, and so expect a more convenient season to accomplish our designs; but since our hopes are not placed in any thing in this world, we regard not those that take away our lives, well knowing they take nothing from us but what we must needs lay down ourselves." It was their care, then, continually to keep company with dying thoughts, and to dwell within the prospect of eternity; it being generally true of all, what St. Jerome particularly reports of Marcella,[z] that she lived so, as always believing that she should immediately die; and never put on her garments but it put her in mind of her grave, and of the sheet that should wrap her up in the house of silence.

But besides the influence which the expectation of their particular dissolutions had upon them, there was one thing which, I doubt not, did mightily contribute to their being weaned from the world, and did strongly animate them to a quick and speedy diligence about the affairs of the other life, and that was, the opinion they generally had of the day of judgment being near at hand: an opinion started early, as appears by that caution which St. Paul gives the Thessalonians about it;[a] and it lasted for some ages after, as is evident from several passages in Tertullian,[b] who always improves it to this purpose, that men should not unnecessarily encumber themselves with the affairs of this life, but carry themselves as those that were immediately passing

[y] Apol. i. s. 11.
[a] 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.
[z] Epitaph. Marcell. ad princip.
[b] Vid. de cult fœmin. l. ii. c. 9. ad uxor. l. i. c. 5.

hence. I conclude with that of Justin Martyr: "Christians (says he[c]) dwell in their own countries but as inmates and foreigners; they have all things common with other men, as fellow-citizens, and yet suffer all things as strangers and foreigners: every foreign region is their country, and every country is foreign to them: they marry, like other men, and beget children, but do not expose or neglect their offspring; they feast in common, but do not exceed, like other men; they are in the flesh, but do not live after the flesh; dwell upon earth, but their conversation is in heaven." Therefore he compares Christians in this world to the soul in the body, as for other reasons, so especially for this; that as the soul lives in the body, but is not of the body, so Christians dwell in the world, but are not of the world: an immortal spirit dwells in a mortal tabernacle, and Christians, while they sojourn in these corruptible mansions, expect and look for an incorruptible state in heaven.

CHAPTER III.

OF THEIR SOBRIETY IN RESPECT OF THEIR GARB AND APPAREL.

Much of the temper of the mind shewn in the outward garb. The great ends of clothes for honesty, necessity, distinction. The primitive Christians accommodated themselves to these. Careful to avoid both singularity and excess. Generally conformable to the sober fashions of the places where they lived. Whether, when they turned Christian, they left off the Roman gown, and took up the *pallium*, or cloak; *a toga ad pallium*. The occasion of Tertullian's writing his excellent book on that subject. The *pallium* principally worn by those that entered upon a life of more than ordinary strictness. Their great care to keep a medium between costliness and sordidness. This accounted part of that pomp and vanity which they renounced in baptism. The vanity of excessive garbs and finery complained of by the fathers in some of those times. Especially invective against methods of artificial beauty; what pleaded in defence of it by some persons in those days, considered and answered out of the fathers. That they were rich, no sufficient argument to patronise the doing of it. Better ways of employing their estates. Nor that they could do it without violating their chastity. The inconveniencies of it with respect to others. That they did it to please their husbands; answered, this needless: every wise and good man content without it. Such arts savoured too much of lewd wanton prostitutes. Painting, and such arts, injurious to God, and a disparagement of his workmanship. This largely prosecuted out of Tertullian and Cyprian. A memorable story which Theodoret relates of his own

[c] Epist. ad Diogn. s. 5.

mother. True beauty accounted to lie in a holy and virtuous mind, and a pure and pious life. Gay and fantastic persons fitly represented by the Egyptian temples. Nazianzen's description of his good sister Gorgonia.

The primitive Christians being thus eminent for their contempt of the world, it is easy to imagine that they were very temperate and abstemious in the use of all the pleasures and conveniencies of human life, which we shall more particularly consider in these three instances: their sobriety in respect of garb and apparel, their temperance in regard of food and diet, and their continence or chastity.

For the first, the care about our garb and dress, it is one of those instances of sobriety which are to be conducted by the rules of religion and reason, and which very much discover a virtuous or a vicious temper: "there are three things (as the son of Sirach well observes) that shew a man what he is, his attire, excessive laughter, and his gait:" there is not, certainly, a more open evidence of a vain mind, than a vain garb and habit. St. Basil,[d] discoursing what habit does best beseem a Christian, tells us in general, that it ought to be such as most lively expresses the meekness and humility of the mind; that good men of old were so attired; and that we are commanded, "having food and raiment, to be therewith content;" not studying variety, and, which most commonly follows it, softness and elegancy, which are but instruments to minister to excess and luxury, introduced into human life through the idle and unnecessary arts of looseness and effeminacy. "It is not enough, (says Tertullian,[e]) that a Christian be chaste and modest, but he must appear to be so? a virtue of which he should have so great a store and treasure, that it should flow from his mind upon his habit, and break from the retirements of his conscience into the superfices of his life," as he there expresses it. More particularly St. Basil tells us,[f] that the habit of a Christian ought to be suitable to the two great ends of clothing instituted by God, viz. honesty and necessity; honesty to hide the less comely parts of the body, and to cover that shame which sin has brought upon mankind: in Paradise, innocency was man's only robe, it was sin brought in the fig-leaved coat; and what should more induce us to be modest in our apparel, than to remember, that our clothes are monitors of our

[d] Reg. fus. disput. interrog. 22.

[e] De cultu fœmin. l. ii. c. 13.

[f] Reg. fus. disput. interrog. 22.

apostacy, and that there is little reason we should pride ourselves in that which is only a cover for our shame, necessity? and so clothes were designed to keep the body in convenient warmth, and to defend it from those injuries and extremities of the air and weather, which would otherwise soon rot down this house of clay. Now to both these ends (he tells us[g]) we ought to accommodate our garments, not striving for variety, having some for uses at home, others for ostentation when we go abroad, but that whatever attains these ends is enough. But besides these, there is a third use and end of clothes noted by Clemens Alexandrinus,[h] and that is for distinction, not only of sexes, but of different ranks and degrees of men, such as agree best to men's age, persons, shape, nature, or their several states and employments; in these respects men may use different and distinguishing habits: nay, he grants that in some cases men may recede from the strict rule and discipline of this affair; and that such women as cannot otherwise gain upon their husbands, may (if they require it) go a little more trim and neat, provided (as he there limits it) it be done only to please and gain upon their husbands, and that they do not practise any artifices of unlawful beauty.

Now that the ancient Christians governed themselves by these rules in this affair, is plain, in that they avoided both singularity on the one hand, and excess on the other, generally conforming themselves to the decent and orderly customs and fashions of the times and places where they lived. Justin Martyr,[i] giving his friend an account of the Christians, tells him, that they differed not from other men, either in their country, or speech, or the usages of civil life; they dwell in their own cities, use the same language with other men, nor have they any singular and extraordinary way of life; they are not in any thing affected or fantastic: but inhabiting partly amongst Greeks, partly in barbarous cities, as every one's lot is fallen, they follow the customs of their country; and both in clothes and diet, and all other affairs of outward life, shew the excellent and admirable constitution of their discipline and conversation. I am not ignorant of what some learned men would have us to believe, that, in those times, when any turned from Paganism to Christianity, they were wont to change their habit, to leave off the *toga*, or

[g] Vid. Cyril. ad illuminat. Catech. iv.

[h] Pædag. l. iii. c. 11.

[i] Epist. ad Diogn. s. 5.

gown, (the common habit almost in all parts of the Roman empire,) and to take up the *pallium*, or cloak: and this they think sufficiently countenanced by the instance of Tertullian, who, laying aside the gown, and putting on the cloak, was accused of lightness and inconstancy by the people of Carthage, and bitterly persecuted with the common sarcasm, *a toga ad pallium*, as one that had wantonly skipped from the gown to the cloak, i. e. from one profession to another; insomuch that he was forced to write an apology for himself, which he did in his book *De Pallio*, where, with a great deal of satirical and sarcastic wit, he retorts upon them, and vindicates himself from their charge and cavils. But that there was any such change of habit at persons first coming over to Christianity, I can see no reason to believe; and for the case of Tertullian, it makes nothing to the purpose, unless it could be proved that he left off the gown at his first entrance upon the Christian religion, which will be hard to make out; for I am clearly of the mind of the learned Salmasius,[k] that he altered his habit and assumed the cloak, not when he first became Christian, but when he was made presbyter of the church of Carthage; whence it is called by him, according to his dialect, *sacerdos habitus*, (for so it is in all ancient manuscripts, and in the first edition of B. Rhenanus, and not *sacer habitus*, as later editions have it,) "the priest's habit," because the Christian priests usually wore it after their entrance upon holy orders. For the better understanding of which, we are to consider a little, that, amongst the Greeks, the philosophic *pallium*, or "cloak," was not commonly worn, but was the proper habit of philosophers, who professed a more severe and accurate course of life. Accordingly, amongst the Christians, those who professed themselves to be ἀσκηταὶ, "the more strict and exact observers of the Christian discipline," whether they were laity or clergy, assumed this habit to themselves; and because the clergy in those times generally took upon them this austere and philosophic way of life, this garb was most peculiar to them: and this probably they did the rather, not only because this was the most plain and simple garment in itself, but because they supposed the apostles (whom they strove to imitate) wore this habit, as is plain they did, as from other passages in the New

[k] Præfat. in Comment. Tertul. de Pallio. Tertull. de Pall. c. 4. Vid. Tert. ex edit. B. Rhenani, p. 620. vid. etiam Salm. in loc.

Testament, so from St. Paul's sending for the "cloak which he left at Troas:" therefore the author of the Apostolical History, who shelters himself under the name of Abdias Babylonius, certainly forgot himself, when describing the habit of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, he made it so trim and fine. *Vestitus* (says he[l]) *colore* (doubtless it should be *colobio*) *albo*, &c. "he was clothed in a white coat, beset with studs of purple, over which he had a white cloak, having purple gems at each corner of it;" a piece of gallantry unknown to the plainness of those times, and unsuitable to the profession of that holy man. Indeed, as plenty and prosperity began to flow in upon the church, this simple and modest garment was laid aside, and the clergy took upon them a more rich and splendid garb; insomuch that when Eustathius,[m] bishop of Sebastia, took upon him to wear the philosophic cloak, and persuaded his followers also to use it, he was, for this very reason, deposed by his own father, Eulalius, bishop of Cæsarea, because wearing a habit unsuitable to the ministerial order; which sentence was, not long after, ratified by the synod of Gangra, and a canon made against it.

From what has been said, it may appear, that although the clergy, and such as entered upon a more strict and ascetic course of life, had a habit peculiar to themselves; yet the generality of Christians differed not from the common garb. They were indeed exceeding careful to avoid all such as savoured of costliness and finery, choosing such as expressed the greatest lowliness and innocency. "The garment that we should wear (says Clemens of Alexandria[n]) ought to be mean and frugal, not curiously wrought with divers colours, (the emblem of craftiness and deceit,) but white, to denote our embracing and professing simplicity and truth: our outward clothing is an indication of the temper of our manners: that is true simplicity of habit which takes away what is vain and superfluous; that the best and most solid garment which is furthest from art and curiosity, and most apt to preserve and keep warm the body." St. Cyprian[o] ever observed a due decorum in his garb as well as his countenance; his aspect was grave and yet cheerful, neither a frowning severity, nor an over-pleasant merriness, but such a happy

[l] Lib. viii. fol. 96. p. 2.
[m] Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. ii. c. 43. Vid. Concil. Gangr. Can. 12.
[n] Pædag. l. iii. c. 11.
[o] Pont. diac. in vit. Cyp. p. 4.

mixture of both that it was hard to say whether he was more to be feared or loved, but that he equally deserved both: and just such was his garb, sober and moderate, keeping a just distance both from slovenliness and superfluity; it neither argued him to be swelled with pride, nor infected with a miserable and sordid mind. Chrysostom,[p] amongst other things, especially commends Olympias, (a woman of great birth and estate, and of no less piety,) for the incredible modesty and meanness of her attire, not much better than that of the poorest beggar, having nothing in her garb or gait that was feigned or gaudy, nothing elaborate or artificial; "which things (says he) were the colours, the bright and beautiful representations of her virtue, whereby that wisdom and divine philosophy that lay hidden in her mind was externally painted and shadowed out." So far were they then from the vanity and affectation of pomp and bravery, of dazzling the eye with rich costly ornaments, that they thought they could never seem mean enough; and this they looked upon themselves as especially bound to by the promise which they had made at baptism, when they renounced the devil, and his whole pomp and service, as the same father elsewhere informs us.[q]

It cannot be denied, but that the fathers frequently complain of, and smartly declaim against the vanity and folly of some in those times, (women especially, by the weakness of their sex more propense to the excesses of pride and superfluity,) who gave up themselves to all the arts of fineness and gallantry, and, out of an emulation to the heathen ladies amongst whom they lived, they affected all manner of pomp and elegancy, striving to be as rich and gaudy, not as they ought, but as they could make themselves; whose excessive prodigality Tertullian[r] does thus no less elegantly than sarcastically describe. "A great estate (says he) is drawn out of a little pocket: it is nothing to expend many thousand pounds[s] upon one string of pearls; a weak tender neck can make a shift to carry about whole woods and lordships; vast sums of money borrowed of the banker, and noted in his account-book, to be repaid every month with interest, are weighed at the beam of a thin slender ear; so great is the strength of pride and ambition, that even the weak feeble body

[p] Ad Olymp. Ep. ii.

[q] Hom. xxi. ad pop. Antioch. s. 3.

[r] De cult. fœm. l. i. c. 8.

[s] In the Lat. *decies sestertium*, which in our money is £ 78,112. 10*s*.

of one woman shall be able to carry the weight and substance of so many pounds taken up at usury." This was looked upon as a very great sin. Clemens Alexandrinus[t] censures it very deep: that though gluttony and intemperance be great vices, yet not to be compared with a nice over-curious study of fineness and bravery; I suppose he means in respect of its insatiable and unbounded nature: for so he adds, "a well-furnished table, and cups that go round, may quickly stop the mouth of a hungry stomach; but where there is a nice affectation of bravery, of gold, purple, or jewels, there not the treasures of the creation, not what is above or under ground, not the spoils of the Tyrian sea, not the fraughts from India or Ethiopia, no nor Pactolus, with his golden streams, would suffice; nay, such persons, though as rich as Midas, would not yet think themselves rich or fine enough." But that which the fathers do most severely censure and cry out against, is not only the expense and costliness of their clothes and jewels, but the arts by which they used to add greater beauty and handsomeness to themselves than God and nature had bestowed upon them. This, it seems, the pride and folly of some Christian women had arrived to, which the zeal and piety of those times did vehemently condemn and protest against. It may not be amiss to consider, what the gallants of those times pleaded for themselves, and what was returned in answer to them. Sometimes they pleaded that they were rich, and had great estates, and ought therefore to live like themselves, and to make use of the estates that God had given them. To this Cyprian answers,[u] that they only are truly rich that are rich in and towards God; that the world ought to be despised, the pomps and delights whereof we then renounced, when we happily turned to God, with the love of whom "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," is not consistent; that the use of riches in this case is to be governed by just and moderate measures; the apostle commanding all women, how rich soever, to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becomes women professing godliness) with good works. St. Peter also requiring of them, not the outward adorning of gold or fine apparel, but the hidden ornament of the heart;

[t] Pædag. l. iii. c. 2.

[u] De discipl. et habit. virgin. p. 95.

that though they were rich, yet they were to consult the honour and modesty of their profession, and might not go to the utmost bounds of what was lawful, some things being lawful which were not expedient, especially when by their wanton and lascivious dress they might be a means to kindle in the breasts of others the flames of an unchaste and unlawful passion,[x] and so prove the occasion of their ruin; that if they thought themselves bound to use the estate that God had given them, God hath shewn them a more excellent way, to relieve the hungry, and feed the poor members of Christ; that this was the best art of improving riches, and the way to lay them up in safe and unfailing treasuries, where we may be sure to reap the fruit of them another day, and not to throw them away upon arts of beauty, upon vain and fantastic dresses. This is the sum of that good man's reasonings in the case.

Sometimes they pleaded, that they might beautify and honour the body without any danger of violating their chastity, or setting open the casement for luxury to fly in upon them. Tertullian[y] answers, let them that had a mind to it glory in the flesh; that for us, we have no designs of glory, partly as being highly unsuitable to us, who by the law of God are under the profession of humility; partly because all glory (to us especially) is vain and swelling, how much more that which arises from the flesh: if we must glory, it is much fitter for us, who follow spiritual things, to please ourselves in the excellencies of the spirit than in those of the flesh: let us rejoice in those things about which we are employed, and seek glory from those things from which we hope for salvation. A Christian may indeed glory in the flesh, but it is when for the sake of Christ it is torn in pieces that the spirit may be crowned, not that it may prove a snare to attract the eyes and sights of young men's ungovernable passions after it; then when it is tormented for confessing the Christian name, when a woman is found stronger than the men that torment her, when she suffers fires, or crosses, or swords, or wild beasts, that she may receive the crown: "these (says Cyprian[z]) are the precious jewels of the flesh, these the much better ornaments of the body." So that (as Tertullian[a] goes on) "beauty being altogether so unuseful to us, ought to be despised by them that

[x] Vid. Constit. Apost. l. i. c. 3.

[y] De cult. fœmin. l. ii. c. 3.

[z] De discipl. et habit. virg. p. 95.

[a] De cult. fœmin. c. 4.

want it, and to be neglected by them that have it: a good woman that is content with her own native beauty, has not that occasion to betray her to lust and folly; and if she had, it would become her, not to promote, but hinder it." Sometimes, again, they pretended, they did it only to please their husbands, and that they might appear more lovely and acceptable to them: to which plea, as being most specious and plausible, I observe especially three things, returned by way of answer.

First, that to design the pleasing of their husbands by such arts as these, was altogether needless, seeing every wise and good man cannot but like his wife best without them. "No wife (says Tertullian [b]) can seem deformed to her own husband, who doubtless was well enough pleased with her, either for her temper, or her beauty, when he first made choice of her: let none fear their husbands will more distaste and dislike them for abstaining from artificial compositions, for every husband is a rigid exactor of his wife's chastity; and consequently they can be of no advantage to this end, whether he be a believing or an unbelieving husband, a Gentile or a Christian: if a Christian, then he will not require any such foreign beauty, as not being taken with those accomplishments which the Gentiles do account so; if a Gentile, then, according to that vile opinion which they have of us Christians, let her do what she can, he will suspect her to be naught: for whose sake therefore should she so curiously dress, so delicately nurse and nourish up her beauty? for a believing husband? he requires it not; for an infidel? he will never believe it to be true; why then should she so much desire to please either one that suspects it, or one that does not desire it?"

Secondly, that these loose delicate arts came too near the practice of lewd wanton prostitutes, who made use of these ways and tricks for no other end but to inveigle men into their embraces: "the bravery of ornaments and apparel, and the additional enticements of beauty, are chiefly used (as Cyprian [c] tells them) by prostitutes and unchaste women; and that no women's garb is more rich and gaudy than theirs, whose modesty is most vile and cheap." And this he tells us the scripture shadows out by the "woman that was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and

[b] Id. ibid. [c] De discipl. et habit. virg. p. 97. Vid. Tert. de cult. fœmin. l. i. c. 4.

filthiness of her fornication:" but chaste and modest virgins shun the dresses of the defiled, the habit of the shameless, the badges of the stews, the ornaments of light wanton women. "Whereas all other creatures, (says Clemens Alexandrinus,[d]) birds and beasts, are content with their own natural beauty and colours; woman only, as if she were inferior to the beasts, thinks herself so deformed as that there is need to repair the defect by external, bought, and borrowed beauty: for while, by infinite arts of curious and costly dresses, (some whereof he there particularly mentions,) they seek to ensnare them, who, children-like, are apt to admire every thing that is strange and gaudy, they shew themselves to be women that have put off shame and modesty; and whoever (says he) calls them so, shall do them no wrong, as carrying the signs and representations of it in their very faces."

Thirdly, they mainly insisted upon this, that these arts were injurious to God, and a disparagement to his workmanship. "We are not (says Tertullian[e]) to seek after neatness and finery beyond what is simple and sufficient, and what pleases God; against whom they offend, who are not satisfied with his workmanship:" an argument which he there prosecutes with great severity. St. Cyprian[f] treads in his master's steps, and prosecutes the same argument with a great deal of zeal and sharpness: amongst other things he tells us, that these additional arts are a bold and sacrilegious attempt, and an high contempt of God; that it is to reform what God has formed, to alter and change his work, and as much as they can to disfigure that person which God has made after his own image and likeness: that such a one has cause to fear, lest, when the day of resurrection comes, he that made them should not know them, nor receive them when they come for the promised rewards. Accordingly, he brings in the great Censor and Judge of the world, thus speaking to such a person: "'This is none of my workmanship, nor is this our image and likeness; thou hast defiled thy skin with false compositions, changed thy hair into an adulterous colour, thy face counterfeit, thy shape corrupt, thy countenance quite another thing; thou canst not behold God, thine eyes not being the same

[d] Pædag. l. iii. c. 2.

[e] De cult. fœmin. l. ii. c. 5. Vid. Constit. Apost. l. i. c. 8. Clem. Alex. Pædag. l. iii. c. 11.

[f] De discipl. et habit. virg. p. 99.

which God created, but which the evil spirit has infected; thou hast imitated the fiery sparkling and glittering eyes of the serpent: of thine enemy hast thou learned to be overtrim and neat, and with him like to receive thy portion.' And are not these (says he) things fit to be thought on by the servants of God, and to be the daily objects of their care and fear?"

I cannot but in this place set down a passage which Theodoret[g] reports of his own mother; that in her younger years having a distemper in one of her eyes, which had baffled all the arts of physic, she was at length persuaded to make her address to one Peter, famous for the gift of miracles, who lived, near Antioch, a very severe and ascetic course of life; and to render herself (as she thought) the more considerable in his eye, she put on all her bravery, her richest robes, and pendants, and chains of pearl, and whatever could render her fine and splendid. No sooner was she come to him, but the severe and uncomplimental man, at first sight, bluntly entertained her with this discourse: "Tell me, daughter, suppose an excellent artist having drawn a picture according to all the laws and rules of art, should expose and hang it forth to view, and another rude and unskilful bungler coming by, should find fault with this excellent piece, and attempt to amend it, draw the eye-brows to a greater length, make the complexion whiter, or add more colour to the cheeks; would not the true author be justly angry, that his art was disparaged and undervalued, and needless additions made to the piece by an unskilful hand? And so it is here: can we think that the great Artificer of the world, the maker and former of our nature, is not, and that justly, angry, when you accuse his incomprehensible wisdom and perfection of unskilfulness and want of knowledge? for you would not add your reds, whites, or blacks, did you not think your bodies needed these additions; and while you think so, you condemn your Creator for weakness and ignorance: but know, that he has power answerable to his will, and, as the psalmist tells us, the Lord has done all things as he pleased: and he that takes care of what is good for all, would not give what is evil and hurtful unto any. Corrupt not therefore the image of God, nor attempt to add what he, in his infinite wisdom, thought not fit to give: study not to invent this adulterate beauty, which even to chaste persons oft proves a

[g] Histor. Religios. c. ix. in vit. Pet. p. 343.

cause of ruin, by becoming a snare to them that look upon it." The holy man said no more, and the young lady presently found herself wounded with the force of his reasonings, but would not leave him till she had obtained the end of her errand, which he granted not without great importunity, and an humble and modest referring all to the grace of God; and so sent her home with a double cure, her body cured of its distemper, and her mind of its pride and vanity; and she ever after led a most humble, sober, and pious life.

But it were to transcribe whole books, to tell you what the fathers (these three that I have so often mentioned especially) have said in this case, the cause being not more copiously than elegantly managed by them; and thither I refer the capable reader, who has any further curiosity for these things. The true beauty of a Christian in those days lay not in external and adventitious ornaments, but in the goodness and purity of the mind. "The beauty of the body (says Clemens of Alexandria [h]) consists in a good complexion, and in apt symmetry and proportion of its parts; but the greatest beauty in the world is that of the soul, when it is adorned with the Holy Spirit, and the excellent graces of it, justice, prudence, fortitude, temperance, the love of goodness and modesty, which is the brightest and most lovely ornament that the eye of man can behold:" "it is not (says he [i]) the exterior aspect of the man that is to be regarded, but the mind that is to be furnished and adorned with goodness and virtue;" and therefore he wittily compares those women that curiously trick and trim up the body, but neglect how it is with the soul within, to the Egyptian temples; look upon their outside, and they are most splendid and magnificent, encompassed with delicate groves, built with large entries and stately porticos, surrounded with several rows of pillars, the walls both within and without set off with stones of several countries, curiously wrought and carved, the temples themselves garnished with gold, silver, amber, and all the glittering and precious stone that India or Ethiopia can afford; but enter within them, and inquire for the deity that is there worshipped, and you shall be gravely shewed, behind a curtain, a cat or a crocodile, or a serpent of that country, or some such ill-favoured beast, which is the residentiary or tutelar deity of that place.

[h] Pædag. l. iii. c. 11.

[i] Ibid. c. 2.

"And just such (says he) do those women seem to me, who trim themselves with gold, and are taken up in curling their hair, painting their faces, blacking their eyes, colouring their locks, and other undue arts of softness and luxury, beautifying the outward rail and fence; but if a man look within the veil and covering of the temple, what is under all his gayness and finery, he shall be so far from meeting with what is truly beautiful, that it will excite his horror and aversation: for he shall not find the image of God dwelling there, as might reasonably be expected; but, instead thereof, some filthy and treacherous beast, that possesses the most inward recesses of the soul, a lustful ape, or that crafty serpent that devours the understanding of a man, and turns his soul into a nest or den, full of most deadly venom, and the poison of his error and deceit."

I conclude this with the account which St. Gregory[k] gives of his sister Gorgonia: that she used no gold to make her fine; no yellow hair, ordered into knots and curls, nor any other tricks to make her head a scene and pageantry; no loose and transparent garments, no lustre of stones and jewels, enlightening the air round about, and reflecting splendour upon them that wear them; no devices and arts of painting, no affectation of beauty that may be easily bought, no counter-working God's creation, dishonouring, reproaching, covering his workmanship with false and deceitful colours, suffering a spurious and supposititious beauty to steal away that natural image which ought to be kept entire to God and the future state. All this was far from her; and though she very well understood the several modes and garbs of bravery amongst women, yet she thought none so honourable as the manner of her life, and that inward brightness that was lodged in her mind. The only redness that pleased her, was that which was the fruit of blushing and modesty; no other whiteness but what came through fasting and abstinence; leaving fucuses, and paintings, and living pictures, and fading beauty, to those that belong to plays and theatres, and to such, for whom to blush and be ashamed is a shame and disgrace. To which I add that of Tertullian,[l] who, after he had smartly condemned and confuted the arts of unlawful beauty, the vanity of going in too curious, costly, and excessive dresses, concludes with this counsel to the women of his

[k] Naz. in laud. Gorg. Orat. xi. p. 181.

[l] De cult. fœmin. l. ii. c. 13. ad fin.

time: to clothe themselves "with the silks of honesty, the fine vestures of piety, the purple of modesty; and being thus beautified and adorned, (says he) God himself will be your lover."

CHAPTER IV.

OF THEIR GREAT TEMPERANCE AND ABSTINENCE.

A vicious curiosity about meats and drinks a great temptation. Severely forbidden by the Christian law. The ancient Christians curious only of such diet as ministered to health. They gratified not ease and delicacy. The great inconveniencies of intemperance either in meats or drinks. Their chief care about spiritual food. For other things content with any provisions, manifested in several instances. An over-nice and superstitious abstinence from some kinds of food condemned. The instance of Alcibiades the martyr, out of Eusebius. Christians unjustly accused by the heathens of excess and prodigality in their feastings. Thyestean suppers laid to their charge. The charge in both parts of it denied, and fully refuted by Tertullian, and other Christian apologists.

Amongst the many temptations that besiege the life of man, there is scarce any into which we are more easily betrayed, than into a vicious curiosity about meats and drinks, and the excesses of an unruly appetite; therefore it is, that the Christian religion does so frequently inculcate upon us the precepts of sobriety and temperance; to be "temperate in all things, to watch and be sober, to cast off the works of darkness, to walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in excess of wine, revellings, and banquetings; to take heed that our hearts be not at any time overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and that we be not as the men of the old world, brutishly taken up with eating and drinking, when the flood came and swept all away." The law of Christ commands us to "fast often, to keep under the body, and to make no provision for the flesh;" if nature, regularly governed, be content with little, religion will teach us to be content with less. These rules the first Christians exactly transcribed into their lives, being the greatest instances of real abstinence and mortification, which they both practised themselves, and pressed upon others: they knew very well that God had given men a charter of freedom, indifferently to use the

creatures, and to enjoy them in some degree, not only for necessity but delight; but yet were afraid to go so far as they might, or to do any thing that might look towards excess, or argue an irregular and unsober mind; they contented themselves with such provisions as were conducive to health and strength, without any studied seeking after those that were more luscious and delightful. It is very true what St. Basil observes,[m] that by reason of men's different ages and course of life, their different tempers and constitutions of body, and other circumstances, no one fixed and certain rule can be prescribed in this case: but yet our food and diet ought for the main to be regulated by the general end of it, which is not wantonly to please the palate, but to minister to health, and to repair the weakness and decays of nature. "Many, (says Clemens Alexandrinus,[n]) like brute beasts, live only that they may eat; but for us, we are commanded to eat, that we may live: for food and pleasure is not the work and design for which we live in the world, our residence here being in order to an incorruptible life; and therefore our nourishment ought to be easy and simple, and such as is subservient to the two main ends of life, health and strength." "We ought to choose such food, (as Justin Martyr tells his friends,[o]) not as may gratify our ease and delicacy, but make our lives useful and serviceable; and if at any time overtaken with want, we should quietly acquiesce in that state:" and therefore, a little after, he smartly declaims against all excess. "Wine (says he[p]) is neither to be drunk daily to excess, nor to be used as commonly as water. Both, indeed, are God's creatures; but water necessary, wine given only to help and relieve the body; which [immoderately taken] chains up the tongue, sparkles fire out of the eyes, makes the legs tremble, and the understanding being gone, readily takes off its cup of deadly poison; contrary to God's ordination, it turns the peaceful instruments of husbandry into swords and spears. It may indeed be necessary sparingly to drink wine both winter and summer; but he that drinks it to excess, as a man that takes overmuch of a medicine, like a dog or a swine, betrays his own shame. But, above all men in the world, it least becomes us, [Christians,] as if we were votaries to luxury, to abuse the creatures of God,

[m] Reg. fus. disput. interrog. xix.
[n] Pædag. l. ii. c. 1.
[o] Epist. ad Zen. et Seren. s. 5.
[p] Ibid. s. 12.

and to make use of thirst as a pretence to drunkenness, seeing we ought to drink no more than what will serve to quench our thirst; not like those who, swallowing down wine, as men do drink in a burning fever, quickly make an end of themselves through their intemperance. Nor are we less to take heed of gluttony, contenting ourselves with a spare diet, and such only as is necessary; not giving way to the infinite and unsatisfied cravings of a nice and intemperate appetite, which will have a thousand pretences to defend itself; but ruling ourselves according to the wise sentence of him who said, *τροφαῖς ἄρα χρηστέον ἵνα τὸ μὴ πεινῆν*, 'that we are to eat only to satisfy our hunger.'" Thus that ancient father. To this purpose also Clemens Alexandrinus discourses at large,[q] representing the great evils and inconveniencies of gluttony and excess; that it wastes the estate, ruins the body by impairing its health, debauching the stomach, deflowering its taste, begetting an ill habitude and temper, and sowing it with the seeds of all diseases; it dulls the mind, and renders it inapt and sluggish, and prepares it for the entertainment of any vice or wickedness; that although we are not absolutely bound to abstain from variety of meats, yet we are not to make them our desire or study, especially such as savour of niceness and delicacy, and are apt to pamper and excite lust and wantonness: for though, it is true, all things were especially made for man's sake, yet it is not convenient to make use of all, and at some times less than at others; to the advantageous use of a thing, respect being to be had, not only to the thing itself, but to the time, occasion, and manner of it: that therefore our meals, for the main, should be light and easy, not mixed with variety of dainties, but such as may prepare for fasting, and the exercises of religion. Upon this account St. Cyprian,[r] in an epistle, wherein he gives directions about prayer, advises them (and to make the counsel more effectual, tells them, that he was warned of it by immediate revelation from God) to eat and drink soberly and sparingly, that outward snares might not enfeeble that heavenly vigour and sprightliness that was in their breasts; lest their minds, being overcharged with too plentiful meals, might be less watchful unto prayer. The same counsel St. Jerome gives to Læta,[s] about the education of her

[q] Pædag. l. ii. c. 1, 2. per tot.

[r] Ad Presb. et Diac. Epist. xi. p. 26.

[s] Epist. ad Læt.

daughter; that her diet should be thin and mean, and that she should never eat more than she might arise with some appetite, so as that after meals she might be presently fit either to read or sing psalms.

When at any time invited to public solemnities, as marriages and the like,[t] the prudence of the church thought fit to lay restraints upon them, and not only to forbid them light and ludicrous actions, as leaping or dancing, but that they should dine and sup gravely and modestly, as becomes Christians.

The chief care of Christians then was to become partakers, *τῆς ἄνω τροφῆς τῆς θείας*, as Clemens Alexandrinus styles it,[u] of that "divine food that is from above," and that only is capable to give real satisfaction, little regarding what provisions they had (so they had but any) for that part that dwelt here below. When Julian the emperor, to raise money for his wars, began to squeeze and oppress the Christians, he sent, amongst others, to St. Basil (who had formerly been his fellow-student at Athens) for a thousand pounds; the answer he sends him was,[x] that it could not be expected there, where he had not so much provision beforehand as would serve for one day; that there were no arts of cookery at his house, nor knives stained with the blood of slaughtered provisions; that his greatest dainties were a few potherbs, a piece of bread, and a little sour vapid wine: no such exceedings as to stupify his senses with fumes arising from a loaded stomach, and to render them incapable to discharge their functions through intemperance and excess. Chrysostom commends Olympias,[y] not more for the modesty of her garb, than the meanness and sobriety of her diet; to which she had so used herself, that she had got the perfect mastery over all undue appetites and inclinations; and had not only bridled the horse, but tamed and reduced him into an entire subjection, and taught her stomach to receive only so much meat and drink as was enough to keep her alive and in health. This, indeed, was the great end of their signal abstinence in those days; that by subduing the flesh they might keep the stricter hand over the inordinate motions of corrupt nature. When Celsus accused the Jews,[z] and in them, obliquely, the Christians,

[t] Conc. Laod. Can. 53.

[u] Pædag. l. ii. c. 1.

[x] Basil. Ep. xli. s. 1. ad Julian. confer. Socrat. l. iii. c. 13.

[y] Epist. ii. ad Olymp.

[z] Orig. contr. Cels. l. v. s. 41. 49.

for needlessly abstaining from swines' flesh, and some other sorts of food; affirming this to be no such great matter, when the Pythagoreans wholly abstained from eating any living creature, who yet were never thought the better, or the more dear to God for it. Origen answers, that "whatever reason the Jews did it for, (God having appointed the difference,) this concerned not Christians; that it is not 'what enters in at the mouth that defiles the man, nor does meat commend us to God,' nor do we think this abstinence any such great matter; nor yet do we so indulge the belly, as to affect or pursue such delights. That there is a vast difference between us and the Pythagoreans in this affair: they indeed abstain upon the account of their absurd and fabulous doctrine of the soul's transmigration, or passing out of one body into another, and so forbear to kill or eat any living creature, lest haply they may destroy and devour their own friends or children; but we, in all our abstinence, do it only 'to keep under the body, and to bring it into subjection;' endeavouring 'to mortify the deeds of the body, to expel and extinguish our members that are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, and every evil concupiscence and desire:'" where he fully vindicates the Christians in their abstemiousness and temperance, from doing it out of any vain and foolish affectation, any nice and singular opinion, any base and sordid, morose or unsociable temper; they were careful to keep the mean, and to avoid sordidness as well as luxury; nor did they profess themselves enemies to the provisions of human life any further, than as they were inconsistent with the ends of sobriety and religion. As may appear from a memorable passage related by Eusebius,[a] out of the letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne in France to those in Asia. Alcibiades (one of those who shortly after suffered martyrdom) had accustomed himself to a very rigid and sordid kind of life, rejecting all other sorts of food except only bread and water; and this he did both before and after he was in prison, which it seems had an ill influence upon others: whereupon Attalus, one of the most eminent of those famous martyrs, the day after his first being exposed in the amphitheatre, had it revealed to him, (for as yet, says the historian, the divine grace had not withdrawn itself, but they had the Holy Spirit as their immediate counsellor to

[a] Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 3.

instruct them; which, by the way, may give countenance to those frequent visions and divine condescensions which Cyprian speaks of in his epistles: to this Attalus it was revealed,) that Alcibiades did amiss in refusing to use the creatures of God, and in thereby giving a scandal and an offence to others: upon which he laid aside his singularity, and, with all thankfulness to God, promiscuously ate any kind of food.

From the whole of what has been said it is very evident, what little reason the heathens had to accuse the Christians (in their *agapæ*, or "love-feasts," especially) of excess and prodigality; for that they did, Tertullian expressly affirms:[b] "our little suppers, (says he,) besides as being guilty of other wickedness, they traduce as prodigal, saying of us, as Diogenes did of the people of Megara, that they supped as if they meant to die to-morrow." Nay, what were infinitely horrid and barbarous, they commonly charged them with Thyestean suppers, and eating man's flesh. To the first part of the charge, concerning their prodigality, Tertullian answers,[c] "that they could easilier 'see a mote in another's eye, than a beam in their own:' if they looked at home, they would find that it was their own tribes and precincts, wherein the very air was corrupted with the unsavory fumes of their loaded tables and overcharged stomachs; and yet all this was passed by, and only the poor Christians' *triclinium* called in question: that if they had any feast, it was a love-feast, and whatever cost was laid out upon it, was expended not for vainglory, but upon the accounts of piety and religion; not to nourish parasites and flatterers, but to refresh the poor: that the order of the feast was as sober and regular as the cause was honest, going no further than modesty would admit; they prayed to God before they ventured upon his creatures, ate but what sufficed hunger, drank no more than consisted with sober and modest men; and fed so, as remembering they were to rise at night to worship God: when they had done, they sung psalms, either of their own composure, or out of the holy volumes; and as they begun, so they ended the feast with prayer, and then departed with the same care, to preserve their modesty and chastity; so that they appeared not so much to have feasted at supper, as to have fed upon discipline and order." So he. For the other part of the charge, their feeding upon man's flesh

[b] Apol. c. 39. Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 35. [c] Ibid.

at this common supper, it was a suggestion so savage and barbarous, as could have found belief with nothing but the very spirit of malice: we shall again meet with this objection in another place, and shall, therefore, here only note out of their apologist,[d] that it was a charge never offered to be made good against them, nor proved in any of those many thousand trials which the Christians had had in all parts of the empire; that it was very unlikely they should be guilty of eating human flesh, who did not think it lawful to be present at the gladiatory sports, where men were slain, or so much as to taste any blood at all. So Biblias[e] the martyr told her enemies, when, being reproached with this in the midst of her torments, she cried out, "How is it possible that we should devour infants, as you charge us, who think it not lawful so much as to taste the blood of any creature?" For even till then, and a long time after, they observed that canon of the first apostolic council, "to abstain from things strangled and from blood." So far were they from being either barbarous or luxurious. "No, our feasts (as he says in Minutius Felix[f]) are not only chaste, but sober; we indulge not ourselves in banquets, nor make our feasts with wine, but temper our cheerfulness with gravity and seriousness." And, indeed, their often watchings and fastings, and their constant observance of the strictest parts of devotion, sufficiently shewed how little they pampered or indulged the flesh, the signs whereof they every where carried in their very faces; and this was so notorious, that their very enemies reproached them with their trembling joints,[g] and their pale ghastly looks. And Lucian,[h] giving an account of the Christian assembly, into which, he tells us, Critias was brought to be made a proselyte, describes them to be "a company of persons with their heads hanging down, and pale faces;" which certainly did not arise from their fear of suffering, (for no men in the world were ever so willing, nay, so desirous of laying down their lives as they,) but from their frequent abstinence and fasting. To which purpose St. Basil's comment is most apposite:[i] where, commending temperance, or (as he calls it) continence, using the word in its largest sense, "other virtues (says he) being mainly exercised in secret, are

[d] Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 35.
[e] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 1.
[f] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 31.
[g] Pallidi, trepidi: apud eundem, c. 12.
[h] Philopatr. vol. ii. p. 1007.
[i] Reg. sŭf. disp. interrog. 17.

not altogether so visible to the eyes of men: whereas continence, wherever it is, will at first sight betray itself: for as a good complexion, and an excellent constitution of body, peculiarly design a man to be an *athletes*, or champion, so leanness of body, and that paleness which is the fruit of continence, evidence a Christian to be a real champion for the commands of Christ, vanquishing his enemy in the weakness of his body, and shews how able he is to contend in the cause of piety and virtue. The very sight of such a man must needs be of great advantage to affect us, to behold him sparingly and moderately using even those things that are necessary, not paying nature its tribute without some regret, begrudging the little time that he spends about it, and therefore making haste to get from the table to return to his better exercises and employments."

CHAPTER V.

OF THEIR SINGULAR CONTINENCE AND CHASTITY.

Their admirable continence discovered in several particulars. Their abstinence from marriage. Their marrying only to comply with the end of the institution. Seldom married more than once. Their continence admired by heathens. The fathers generally severe against second marriages. The moderate judgment of Clemens Alexandrinus in the case. The canons of several councils concerning it. Three sorts of digamy, or second marriages. Their shunning all occasions and appearances of lightness and immodesty; abstaining from public meetings, feasts, plays, &c. Constantine's law, that no widow should be forced to appear at public tribunals. Another of Theodosius, that none should marry within twelve complete months after her husband's decease. The promiscuous use of baths forbidden both by canon and civil laws. Unmarried persons, especially of ecclesiastic relation, not familiarly to converse together. *Mulieres* Συνείσακτοι, who. How brought in: condemned by the council of Antioch, and that of Nice. Clandestine marriages disallowed. Their abhorring all immodest pictures and discourses. The great modesty of Gorgonia. Their valuing chastity above life; submitting to any kind of death rather than violate it; many choosing to kill themselves rather than be deflowered. Several instances of it. Impurity in Christians bewailed as a great scandal; punished by the church with very severe penalties. Several passages out of the fathers and councils noted to that purpose. Christians accused by the heathens of incest and adultery. The sum of the charge. Their answer. The heathens very unfit to bring in this charge, being themselves so notoriously guilty; whole nations, their wisest philosophers, their very gods themselves: this fully proved against them. The very Gentiles tacitly confessed the Christians innocent, by condemning them to be forcibly prostituted. A part of their religion not to give way to wanton looks or unchaste desires. The eminent prevalency of Christianity in converting persons from uncleanness and debauchery, pleaded and

asserted. The original of the accusation inquired into. Found to arise from the beastly practices of the Gnostics, &c.; who, though guilty of the most notorious villanies, and of these in particular, yet shrouded themselves under the general name of Christians. Some forced through fear to confess the Christians guilty of these crimes.

A THIRD considerable instance of that sobriety and moderation for which the Christians were so renowned of old, was their continence, in abstaining from all manner of uncleanness, which is that virtue that we properly call chastity; a virtue for which how eminent they were, (notwithstanding what their enemies heavily charged upon them to the contrary, of which afterwards,) we shall take notice of in some few particulars.

First: the Christians of those times were so far from breaking in upon any unchaste embraces, that they frequently abstained even from lawful pleasures, and kept themselves even from the honourable and undefiled bed, never marrying all their life. "We are (says Octavius[k]) chaste in our speech, and chaster in our bodies: and very many of us, though we do not boast of it, do inviolably preserve a perpetual virginity; and are so far from any extravagant desire after incestuous mixtures, that many stand at a distance from the most chaste and modest embraces." Thus Justin Martyr[l] tells the emperors, that amongst the Christians there were a great many of either sex, who had from their childhood been educated in the Christian discipline, who for sixty or seventy years had kept themselves single and uncorrupt; and he wished the like could be shewn in all other sorts of men. To the same purpose, another apologist:[m] "it is very easy (says he) to find many amongst us, both men and women, who remain unmarried, even in old age; conceiving that in this state they shall have fitter opportunities of drawing near to God." Not that they who persevered in this course of celibate did combine themselves into distinct societies, and bind themselves under an oath of perpetual virginity, (as the humour was in after ages,) for of this not the least shadow appears in any of the writings of those times: they lived promiscuously till towards the end of the third century, applied themselves to the business of their place and station, and only lived single, that in those troublesome and hazardous times of persecution they might be less ensnared with the entanglements of the world, and be more free for the exercises of religion.

[k] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 31. [l] Apol. i. s. 15. [m] Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 33.

Secondly: when they did marry, they generally professed they did it only to comply with the great end of the institution, viz. the propagation of mankind; not to gratify wanton and brutish desires, but to answer the great end of nature, that human society might not fail. "Either (say they[n]) we marry not at all, but keep ourselves always continent; or if we do marry, it is for no other end but the bringing forth and the bringing up of children: whoever amongst us takes a wife according to the laws prescribed us, he reckons he does it only for the begetting of children; within this, his desires are bounded and limited; as the husbandman concerns himself no further in tilling his ground and sowing of his corn, than to bring forth the crop at harvest." Hence it was that they seldom married more than once: "we willingly contain ourselves (as he speaks in M. Felix[o]) within the bound of single marriage, and either know but one woman, (and that merely out of a desire of children,) or none." The first knot being loosed by death, they very rarely tied a second; which gained great honour and reputation, both to them and to their religion, with the Gentiles amongst whom they lived. Chrysostom tells us,[p] that a discourse happening on a time between him and his master, who was a Gentile, concerning his mother, and being told that she was a widow, and, after inquiry concerning her age, being answered that she was forty years old, and that she had lived twenty years of the time a widow, the man was surprised with a strange admiration, and cried out, before all the company, "Behold (saith he) what brave women there are amongst the Christians." The truth is, such was the heavenly zeal and temper of the first ages of Christianity, that they would have no more to do with the world than they needs must, but industriously shunned all its burdens and encumbrances, amongst which they especially reckoned marriage a state not rashly to be engaged in; for once it was allowable, but for a second time inexcusable. And indeed it cannot be denied but that many of the ancient fathers, Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, and others, did inveigh against second marriages with too much bitterness and severity, violently pressing many passages in scripture to serve the cause, straining the string many times till it cracked again; and not sticking to censure and condemn second marriages as little better than

[n] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 29. Athenag. ibid.
[o] Octav. c. 31.
[p] Ad vid. junior.

adultery. Hear what one of the apologists says to it:[q] "amongst us, every man either remains as he was born, or engages himself in one only marriage; for as for second marriages, they are but a more plausible and decorous kind of adultery; our Lord assuring us, that 'whoever puts away his wife, and takes another, commits adultery:'" which place, as also another of like importance, how perversely he interprets, and impertinently applies to his purpose, I am not willing to remember. Clemens Alexandrinus[r] speaks in the case with much more modesty and moderation: "as for those to whom God has given the gift of absolute continence, we think them happy: we admire the gravity and staidness of those that content themselves with a single marriage; but yet say withal, that compassion ought to be had of others, and that we should bear one another's burdens, lest he who seems to stand fair do fall himself: and as for second marriages, that of the apostle is to take place, 'if they cannot contain, they should marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.'" However, it is certain the fathers of old generally did what they could to discourage second marriages. The ancient canons (as Zonaras[s] tells us) suspended such persons from the communion for a whole year; and the council of Laodicea,[t] though it determine not the time, yet it requires that they should spend some small time at least in penance, in fasting and prayer, before they be received to the communion. By the canons that are called apostolical,[v] whoever after baptism has engaged in a second marriage, is rendered incapable of any degree in the ministry. Accordingly, Epiphanius[u] reports of one Joseph, whom he knew, a converted Jew, and advanced to the dignity of a count by Constantine the Great, that when the Arians would have laid hands upon him to have made him bishop, he got off by this wile, by pretending himself to have been twice married. But though the fathers and ancient councils were thus severe in this case, yet the rigour of their censure will be much abated, if what some tell us be true, that many of their passages are not levelled against successive marriages, but against having two wives at the same time. For as a learned man hath observed,[x] there were three

[q] Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 33.
[r] Strom. l. iii. c. 1. vid. Epiph. Hæres. xlviii. c. 9. Cyril. ad Illum. Catech. iv.
[s] De Can. 7. Conc. Neocæsar. [t] Can. 1. [v] Can. 17.
[u] Hæres. xxx. c. 5. [x] Justell. not. in Can. 1. Conc. Laod.

sorts of digamy: the first, a man's having two wives at once; this was condemned by the Roman laws: the second, when the former wife being dead, the man married a second time: a third, when for any slight cause a man put away his wife by a bill of divorce, and married another, which though then frequently practised and connived at (if not allowed) by the laws of those times, was yet prohibited by the decrees of the church; and of this last sort, (says he,) many of the ancient canons are to be understood.

Thirdly: they were infinitely careful to shun all occasions and appearances of lightness and immodesty, whatever might tend to inveigle their senses, and to debauch their mind and manners; nay, whatever might but give a suspicion of wantonness and incontinence. They declined, as much as might be, going to all public meetings, such as feasts, plays, shows, &c. Therefore Cyprian[y] severely chides with some virgins, for being present at weddings, where they laughed freely, could not but hear loose discourses, see uncomely carriages, feed upon luxurious dishes, all which must needs not only kindle, but add fuel to the fire, and fill their minds with indecent thoughts and desires. St. Jerome,[z] on the other hand, does as much commend some whom he knew, who always kept at home on festival days to avoid the crowd and gazes of the people, and would never go abroad at those times when they could not venture into public without the greatest care and custody of themselves. For this reason Constantine made a law,[a] that matrons should not be forced, upon the account of debt, to come out of their own houses, to appear before the public tribunals, but that the business should be decided in such way as might not betray the modesty of that sex. And when afterwards the fervour of Christianity began to abate apace, and persons had, in a great measure, lost that huge reverence which former times had for continence and chastity, Theodosius,[b] to restrain them a little within the bounds of decency, provided a law, that no woman, of what quality or rank soever, should marry again within a year, at least, (i. e. within twelve full months; whereas, under the old Roman laws, the time of mourning was but ten, as a learned interpreter of

[y] De discipl. et hab. virg. p. 100.
[z] De virg. servand.
[a] Cod. Theodos. lib. i. tit. x. l. 1.
[b] Ibid. lib. iii. tit. viii. l. 1. Vide Gothofred. in loc.

that law observes,) after her husband's death, and this he ratified by a double penalty; a note of perpetual infamy to be set upon the offending person, and the loss of her whole dower, and whatever estate her husband had bequeathed her, which was to go to the children she had by him, or (if none) to his next of kin. By the Laodicean council,[c] not only clergymen, and such as have entered upon a state of continency, but all Christian men whatsoever, are forbidden to use the same common baths with women: and for very good reason; it being a thing (as Zonaras observes) both shameful and uncomely in itself, and pernicious in its consequence: for how easily does any unlawful flame kindle from such a spark? And when human nature is of itself so ready to boil over, who would pour oil upon the fire? A thing ever looked upon as repugnant to all the laws of modesty, yea, even by them that are without; this being (says the council) one of the chiefest things which the very heathen condemn, and for which they censure and reproach us. Parallel to this, Photius[d] and his commentator Balsamon tell us of a law of the emperor Justinian, making it a sufficient cause of divorce, and losing her dowry, for a woman either to feast or bathe in the company of other men, without the leave and consent of her husband. Indeed, in the first and purer times, they took all imaginable care that unmarried persons, especially such as were of ecclesiastical cognizance, or had devoted themselves to a severer course of piety, should not commonly converse together. Cyprian,[e] writing to Pomponius about the virgins that had taken profession of continence upon them, but lived too familiarly with some persons that belonged unto the church, charges him, that men and virgins should not only not sleep near one another, but not dwell together in the same house, lest the infirmity of their sex, and the slipperiness of their youth, should betray them into the snare of the devil. Wherefore he commends Pomponius for having suspended the deacon, and the rest that had kept such familiar correspondence with those virgins; and ordered that they should not be absolved, till they had sufficiently testified their repentance, and made it appear, by satisfactory evidence, that no unlawful familiarity had passed between them; and that if ever they returned to the like cohabitation, greater penalties should

[c] Can. 30. Vid. Conc. in Trull. Can. 77.

[d] Nomocan. τίτλ. θ'. κεφ. λα'. p. 104.

[e] Epist. iv. p. 8. Videsis Conc. i. Carthag. Can. 3, 4.

be inflicted upon them. The foundation of which ill custom doubtless sprung, or at least took encouragement from hence: in those first times of Christianity, it was usual for clergymen, such especially as were sent up and down to preach the gospel, to have some grave and sober woman along with them, who might be helpful and assisting to them, and who was neither wife nor concubine, but taken in either upon the account of necessary attendance, or the pretence of piety. These women, in the writings of the church, (whercin there is frequent mention of them,) are called *συνείσακτοι*, such as were brought in, taken into the house as domestic assistants to ecclesiastic persons. But this proving matter of scandal and inconvenience, was not only cried out against by private fathers, but by public synods: the council of Antioch, held in the reign of Aurelian the emperor, anno 272, in a synodical epistle,[f] wherein they censure the doctrines and practices of Paulus Samosetanus, condemn this among the rest, that he and his presbyters and deacons kept these introduced women, whereby horrible inconveniencies did arise; for besides the snare and temptation of it, although they should keep themselves innocent, yet they could not avoid the suspicion and scandal that would arise, and the danger of drawing in others by their bad example. For which reason, St. Basil[g] writes to an old presbyter in his diocese, to abstain from the company of a woman with whom he was wont to cohabit; not so much to avoid temptation to incontinence, (the man being then seventy years of age,) as that he may not lay a stumbling-stone and occasion of offence in his brothers' way. The same was universally forbidden by the great council of Nice,[h] and no man within the clergy allowed to have any woman near him, unless his mother, his sister, or his aunt, or such only of whom there could be no suspicion, as we find it in the third canon of that council: in the ancient version whereof these *mulieres συνείσακτοι* are styled *extraneæ*, "strangers;" by which name they are also called in a law of the emperor Honorius,[i] prohibiting any clergyman whatsoever to keep company with these strange women, limiting their converse and cohabitation within the very same relations to which they are restrained by the Nicene canon, which it is not to be doubted that emperor had in his eye when

[f] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 30.
[g] Epist. lv. ad Paregor. Presbyt.
[h] Can. 3. ubi vid. Zonar.
[i] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. ii. de Episc. l. 44.

he made that constitution.[k] And because bishops were the highest order in the church, therefore, that their honour might be especially secured, care was taken, that no bishop, under penalty of being deposed, should entertain, or cohabit with any woman whatsoever, either relation or stranger, that so all pretence either of temptation or scandal might be cut off. For the same reason it was, that they disallowed all clandestine marriages which were not openly made in the face of the church,[l] accounting them no better than a state of adultery or fornication. And as they were careful not to give offence to others, so they were not willing themselves to come within the shadow of a temptation, they stood at a distance from whatever was offensive either to their eyes or ears; their ears they stopped against all loose idle songs, all filthy and obscene discourses, their eyes they shut against all uncomely objects, all wanton and lascivious pictures, as Clemens Alexandrinus[m] expressly tells us; not doing any thing that seemed but to carry an ill colour with it. Nazianzen[n] tells us of his sister Gorgonia, a virtuous woman, whose example we have often quoted, that for modesty and sobriety she went beyond all other women; that she reconciled the two opposite states of human life, celibate and marriage; the one more sublime and divine, but more dangerous and troublesome, the other more humble, but withal more safe: that she avoided the inconveniencies of each, and chose what was most excellent out of both, the sublimity of the one, and the security of the other; shewing that neither of these states in itself did wholly tie us up either to God or the world, nor yet wholly separate us from them, so that the one should be absolutely rejected, or the other absolutely commended and embraced; but that it is the mind that admirably presides both over marriage and virginity: and, withal, further adds concerning her,[o] that so great was her bashfulness and modesty, that when she lay under a most acute and dangerous distemper, yet she refused to have any physician come near her, as blushing that any man should either see or touch her.

Fourthly: they valued their innocency and their honour above their lives, and therefore chose to undergo the greatest dangers,

[k] Synops. Basil. lib. i. tit. i. c. 41.
[l] Tertull. de pudicit. c. 4.
[m] Cohort. ad Græc. c. 4. vid. Conc. vi. in Trull. Can. 100.
[n] Orat. xi. p. 180.
[o] Ibid. p. 185.

to die, yea, to kill themselves, rather than any violence should be offered to their chastity. As the fairest promises could not tempt them, so neither could the fiercest torments affright them into any unchaste compliance. When Maximinus the emperor governed in the Eastern parts,[p] amongst other effects of his wild and brutish fury and extravagance, he filled all places where he came with adulteries and ravishments, abusing women and deflowering virgins; which succeeded well enough (says the historian) with all others, except only Christians, who generously despising death, made light of the rage and fury of the tyrant. The men underwent all sorts of punishments which cruelty could invent: the women bore up with a courage no less manly and unconquerable; and when any were drawn out to be abused, they rather submitted their lives to death than their bodies to dishonour. Of these he tells us of one especially, at Alexandria, a woman of great birth and fortunes, but much more famous for her virtues, especially her modesty and chastity, which she stoutly defended, and preferred before her nobility, or her riches, her excellent parts, or any accomplishments whatsoever. The emperor had oft attempted her by all arts of solicitation, but all in vain; till at last, not being able to prevail, his affection somewhat attempering his fierceness and cruelty, he would not put her to death, which she was most ready to have undergone, but spoiled her of her estate, and then sent her into banishment: there being many hundreds of others at the same time, who, not able to bear the violation of their chastity, wherewith the governors and commanders threatened them, willingly subjected themselves to all kinds of racks and tortures, and the worst capital punishments which their enemies could inflict upon them. Nay, when the case so happened that they were set upon, and all their resoluteness could not provoke the cruel kindness of their enemies to despatch them, they would rather despatch themselves, than fall into the rude hands of lust and wantonness. Thus did that famous woman and her two daughters, (mentioned by the same author,[q] whose names, as Chrysostom,[r] in an oration on purpose in their commendation, tells us, were Domnina the mother, Bernice and Prosdoce the daughters,) eminent as well for the outward beauty and features of their bodies, as for the

[p] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. viii. c. 14.
[q] Ibid. c. 12.
[r] Hom. de SS. Domn. Ber. Prosd.

inward virtues of their minds, being sought for as a prey to lust under the Dioclesian persecution, they fled for it; but being found out by the soldiers that were sent to search for them, and knowing there was no other way to escape, in their return, they begged leave of the soldiers, that for some private occasions they might step a little out of the road; which being granted, fitting themselves for what they had beforehand agreed on, as well as the time would give them leave, they unanimously threw themselves into the river, and there perished in the waters. The like he relates of a noble woman at Rome,[s] wife to the prefect, or chief governor of the city, (but a Christian,) that Maxentius the emperor being passionately inflamed with the love of her, sent officers to fetch her, who, breaking into the house, to the great terror of her husband, would violently have seized on her, of whom she begged only so much time as that she might a little dress and adorn herself; under which pretence, retiring into her chamber, she caught up a sword, and by a fatal stroke left the messengers nothing but a dismal spectacle of amazement and horror. These instances (both of them highly applauded by Chrysostom and Eusebius) I quote, not to justify a man's laying violent hands upon himself as either lawful or laudable; whether in some such cases persons might not be acted by some divine motions, extraordinary and heroic impulses, (the case of Sampson, &c.) as St. Augustine inclines to believe,[t] it is not very pertinent for me to inquire; it being enough to my purpose to observe, that they were great evidences how highly they prized chastity and integrity, which they were willing to secure at so dear a rate.

And in those cases wherein life was not concerned, they gave the greatest testimony how much they abhorred all uncleanness. None were ever more hearty enemies to idolatry; and yet Origen, at Alexandria, (if that story be true,[u]) when put to this unhappy choice, either to sacrifice or defile himself, chose rather to commit idolatry than fornication: though even that, too, was rather his enemies' act than his own, they thrusting the frankincense into his hand, and haling him up to the altar.

Fifthly: whenever any was found guilty of the least uncleanness, it was looked upon and bewailed as a very heinous sin, and a great dishonour to the Christian name: "What is it that I

[s] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. viii. c. 14.

[t] De Civ. l. i. c. 26. ubi de hac ipsa re agit.

[u] Epiph. Hæres. lxiv. s. 2.

hear, (says Cyprian,[x]) how detestable should it be to you, what, with the greatest grief and affliction of my mind, I have understood, that there are some amongst you who have defiled their bodies, the temples of God, even after they were sanctified by confession, and cleansed by baptism, with filthy and infamous embraces, promiscuously using the beds and lodgings of the women? when although they should be free from actual adultery, yet even in this it would be a fault of a mighty aggravation, that by their scandalous example others might be seduced into ruin." St. Basil,[y] writing to a monk, who had been overtaken with this fault, elegantly bewails the greatness of his sin, as a dishonour to the strictness of his former profession; a reproach to those lips which had kissed the mouths of so many saints; to those hands which so many devout persons had embraced as pure and undefiled; to those knees before which so many servants of God had fallen down; as a being caught in the snare of a crafty devil, a perfidious violation of his promises, a being become a sport and scorn to Jews and Gentiles, a confuting (what in him lay) that triumphant speech of Christ, that he had "overcome the world;" filling, even to the place where he lived, a cup of infamy and reproach. In the next epistle, he deals with the woman, and treats her with the same elegant severity; though in both he so aggravates the case, as to excite them to repentance, and to a speedy recovery of themselves out of the snare of the devil. But because good words and persuasions were not cords strong enough to restrain some men's irregular lusts and passions, they twisted with them the discipline of the church: and therefore,

Sixthly, they were wont to punish the breach of chastity by inflicting severe penalties upon incontinent persons. Amongst all the sins that were most sharply punished in the ancient church, adultery was one of the chief; whoever was convicted of it was immediately cast out of the church, and disowned as a rotten member: this, Tertullian tells us,[z] first made Marcion turn heretic; for being found guilty of lying with a virgin, and for that thrown out of the communion of the church, he betook himself to one Cerdon, a master heretic, and espoused his doctrines and opinions. The truth is, in those first times, the

[x] Ad Rogat. et Confess. Epist. xiii. p. 30.

[y] Ad Monac. laps. Epist. xlv.

[z] Vid. Tertul. de Pudicit. c. 7. de Hæres. c. 13.

punishment of adultery was very great, perpetual penance all a man's life, and scarce being admitted into communion at the very hour of death; till pope Zephyrinus, about the year 216, considering the great inconveniencies of so much severity, persons hereby being oft driven into despair, and others discouraged from coming over to the Christian faith, ordered that penance, in this case, should be limited to a shorter time, which being ended, such persons might be received again into the bosom of the church. This decree gave great offence to the African churches, most whereof stood up for the strictness of the ancient discipline. Tertullian[a] more especially inveighs against it with much bitterness and animosity, as a thing unfit in itself, and an innovation in the church. The same, Cyprian[b] also plainly intimates, though he himself was for the more mild opinion. By the Ancyran council,[c] held anno 315, it was decreed, that whoever was guilty of adultery, should be punished with a seven years' penance before they were admitted to the communion. By the synod of Illiberis,[d] if a man, after having done his penance for the first fault, fell afterwards into the same sin again, he was not to be taken into communion, no, not at the hour of death. The same punishment they inflicted upon bawds,[e] and such persons as for gain prostituted the bodies of their children, by selling them (or themselves rather, of whom their children were a part) to lust and ruin. St. Basil,[f] writing to Amphilochius, rules for the conduct of discipline, and the measures of repentance, sets adultery at fifteen years' penance, fornication at seven, and then to be admitted to the holy sacrament. His brother Gregory,[g] bishop of Nyssa, treating about the same affairs, appoints fornication to be punished with no less than nine years' penance and suspension from the sacrament; and adultery, and all other species of uncleanness, with double that time; though allowing a liberty to the spiritual guide to contract this time, as the circumstances of the case or person might require. But both these last mentioned being but private bishops, their canons could be no further obligatory than to those particular dioceses that were under their charge. And, indeed, their censures of the church in this case did much vary, according to time and place; in some

[a] Lib. de Pudicit. c. 1.
[b] Ad Antonian. Epist. lv. p. 110.
[c] Can. 20.
[d] Can. 7.
[e] Can. 12.
[f] Epist. Can. lviii. lix.
[g] Ep. Canon. ad Letoi. Can. 4. vol. i. p. 951.

more rigid and severe, in others more lax and favourable; though in all, such as did abundantly shew what hearty enemies they were to all filthiness and impurity whatsoever.

What has been hitherto said of the modesty, the chaste and sober carriage of the primitive Christians, will receive further light, if we consider how clearly they vindicated themselves from that malicious charge of incest and adultery which the heathens commonly charged upon them; so commonly, that we scarce find any of the ancient apologists but takes notice of it, and confutes it. The sum of the charge, as it is more formally drawn up by the heathen in M. Felix,[h] take thus: "that the Christians knew one another by certain privy marks and signs, and were wont to be in love with, almost before they knew one another; that they exercised lust and filthiness under a pretence of religion, promiscuously calling themselves brothers and sisters, that, by the help of so sacred a name, their common adulteries might become incestuous: that, upon a solemn day, they meet together at a feast, [he means their love-feasts,] with their wives, children, sisters, mothers, persons of every age and sex; where, after they have well eaten and drunk, and begun to be warm and merry, heated with the excess of wine, a piece of meat is thrown for the dogs, who, being tied to the candlesticks, begin to leap and frisk about, till they have run away with and put out the lights; and then nothing being left but darkness, the fit cover and shadow for impudence and villany, they promiscuously run amongst one another into filthy and incestuous embraces: and if they be not all alike guilty of incest, it is not the fault of their will, but the good fortune of their chance, seeing what actually happens to one, is intentionally the lot of all." This is the tale; which however absurd and incredible, yet strangely found belief, or at least was pretended to be believed, amongst the enemies of Christianity. Now, though it be sufficiently refuted by what has been already said, yet we may observe the Christians of those times further pleading these four things in their own vindication.

First, that if the charge had been true, yet the heathens had little reason to object it to the Christians, being themselves so notoriously guilty in this kind.[i] For adultery, nothing more common amongst them: and for incest, it was a general indict-

[h] Octav. c. 9.

[i] Tertul. Apol. c. 9. et 39. Min. Fel. Octav. c. 31.

ment of whole nations; the Persians usually lying with their own mothers, the Macedonians and Egyptians marrying with their own sisters, and this done even at Athens itself; their histories full of them, their plays and tragedies, which they frequented every day with great applause, represented them as lawful and commendable. Socrates himself,[k] the great glory of the heathen world, was condemned at Athens, amongst other things, for sodomy, and the corrupting of youth; and some of Plato's school have perished in the very act of adultery. Nay, their very gods themselves, whom they worshipped and adored, were highly guilty in this kind: they feign those things of us (says Athenagoras[l]) which they themselves report of their own gods; whose lusts and wantonnesses it is no wonder if they style mysteries: were they such hearty enemies to shameful and promiscuous mixtures, they must abhor their great god Jupiter, who begot children both of Rhea the mother, and Proserpina the daughter, and married with his own sister. And who was (unless Orpheus, their great poet, lies) more wicked and vile in this kind than Thyestes himself? Clemens Alexandrinus tells them,[m] that as they had ordered the matter, by the marriages, begetting children, adulteries, and banquets of their gods, (which they set out in their plays and poems,) they had turned heaven into a comic scene, and made the deity a piece of dramatic sport, and by satiric wit had jested religion, and whatever was most sacred, into scorn and laughter. Nothing more usual amongst them, (as he there observes,) than to hang their rooms with the pictures of their gods drawn in the most lascivious and propudious postures, engaged in the most filthy and dishonest actions, enough to shame intemperance itself. "These (says he) are the original patterns of your soft effeminacy; this your beastly and shameful divinity; these the doctrines of your gods, copartners with you in your uncleanness and adultery." And whereas they might pretend, that these stories of their gods were only the extravagant inventions of their poets, who took a liberty to say any thing to gratify the people; Athanasius answers,[n] that hereby they shook the very foundation of their gods, having no other authority for their existence, than what account their poets gave them; so

[k] Tertul. Apol. c. 46.
[l] Legat. pro Christian. s. 32.
[m] Cohort. ad Græc. c. 4. Videsis Jul. Firm. de Err. Prof. Relig. p. 20.
[n] Orat. contr. Gent. c. 16.

that if they feigned their actions, they might with equal reason be supposed to feign their very names and persons, there being the same ground of belief for the one as for the other; and that there was as much reason to believe they spake truth in this, as in the relation of any other matters of fact, concerning Achilles, Ulysses, Nestor, Hector, or any of the rest, all depending upon the same warrant and authority. This propagated looseness and uncleanness to them under the notion and shadow of religion; such as the gods are, such warrantably may be their worshippers. "Wherever you are, (says Tertullian,[o]) at home, or abroad, or beyond the seas, lust is your companion, which often stumbles upon incest; whereas chastity, diligently and faithfully preserved, keeps us from any such event, and we are as far from incest as we are from whoredom, or any excess in a married state; yea, many prevent all possibility of this charge, by containing themselves within perpetual virginity." "And yet though we are thus, (says another apologist,[p]) yet there want not those who object these thing to us; and, as it is in the proverb, ἡ πόρνη τὴν σώφρονα, 'the strumpet reproaches the honest woman:' for though they merchandize for lust, and keep open shop for all manner of uncleanness, not abstaining from the violation and abuse of youth, males with males committing that which is unseemly; though themselves are guilty of these villanies, which they report also of their gods, and do themselves boast of them as brave achievements, yet have they the face to accuse us of them. Adulterers and Sodomites as they are, they charge us, who are either always continent, or never marry more than once; themselves, in the mean while, living like fishes, where the great ones subdue and swallow up the less.[q] Such infamous filthinesses are done amongst you, which we do not care to hear, and may much less defend; you laying things to the charge of chaste and modest men, while we could not believe that there should be such things done in the world, were not you yourselves instances of them." This consideration made Justin Martyr[r] thus freely and passionately bespeak the senate: "It were to be wished, that somebody getting up into a high place should, with a loud voice, cry out, 'Be afraid, be afraid to charge those things, of which you yourselves are openly guilty, upon the innocent and undeserving; to attribute what belongs

[o] Apol. c. 9. [p] Athen. leg. pro Chr. s. 34. [q] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 29. [r] Apol. ii. s. 12.

only to yourselves and to your gods, to those with whom there is not so much as the shadow of any such thing to be found. Learn to be more wise and sober, and repent of such injustice.'"

Secondly: that the heathens themselves did tacitly confess Christians to be innocent in this case, when their great care was how they might debauch them; it was a part of their severest punishment to be prostituted, and exposed to rudeness and violence; a penalty which they would never have inflicted upon them, had they really been such lewd profligate persons as their enemies endeavoured to represent them. This plea Tertullian urges in the close of his apology;[s] "condemn, (says he,) crucify, and torment us; your cruelty and injustice is the evidence of our innocency, and therefore God suffers it to come upon us: for while you choose rather to condemn a woman, that is a Christian, to the stews than to the lions, you plainly confess, that the violation of chastity is accounted by us a heavier penalty than any punishment or kind of death which you can inflict upon us."

An eminent instance hereof, (though of the other sex,) St. Jerome[t] relates to this purpose: "In the time of the Decian persecution, a young man, a Christian, then in the flower and beauty of his age, whose constancy had been oft attempted by other means to no purpose, was at last set upon in this manner: he was carried into a pleasant garden, and into a part of it beset with lilies and roses, hard by the banks of a crystal river, whose soft murmurs, together with the music made by the leaves of the trees, waved by the gentle motions of the wind, conspired to render it a place for pleasure and delight: here, upon a bed of down, the young man was laid; and that he might not be able to help himself, or shift his posture, was tied down with silken cords: the company withdrawing, a beautiful strumpet was sent in to him, who began to caress him with kisses and embraces, treating him with all the arts of wantonness, not consistent with modesty to name. How to relieve himself, in this case, the poor man knew not; but finding the temptation beginning to prevail, he presently bit off his tongue, and spit it in her face as she attempted to kiss him, by the greatness of his pain extinguishing those sensual titillations which her wicked artifices began to kindle in him."

[s] Cap. ult. [t] Vit. Pauli Eremit.

Thirdly: they confidently assured them, that, amongst Christians, it was not only unlawful to be actually unclean, but to look after a woman with wanton and unchaste desires. "Our Lord (says Justin Martyr[u]) has told us, that whosoever looks after a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart; and that if our right eye offend us, we must pluck it out: as, therefore, human laws condemn two wives, so, by the laws of our Master, they are sinners who look upon a woman with unfit desires after her: for not only he that really commits adultery is rejected by him, but even he that has a mind to it; not only our actions, but our very thoughts being open unto God." So Athenagoras:[x] "So far are we from any promiscuous embraces, that we are not permitted the freedom of an unchaste look; for whoever (says our Lord) looks after a woman to desire her, has played the adulterer with her in his heart. We are not, therefore, allowed to use our eyes to any other purposes, than those for which God created them, viz. to be lights to the body. To abuse them to wantonness, is to be guilty of adultery, forasmuch as they know they were made for other ends, and cannot but be conscious to themselves of their own thoughts: and how is it possible for men under such limitations to be otherwise than chaste and sober? For we have not to deal with human laws, under which a man may be wicked, and yet escape; but our discipline was delivered by God himself; we have a law, which makes ourselves the rule and measure of righteousness towards others. According, therefore, to the difference of age, we account some as sons and daughters, others as brethren and sisters; the more aged we honour in the place of parents: those, therefore, whom we account as sisters, or as allied to us in any other relation, we reckon it a matter of great concernment that they should be chaste and incorrupt."

Fourthly: they pleaded that this objection would easily vanish, if they would but consider what a strange change and alteration was in this very case wrought upon persons at their first conversion to Christianity; immediately becoming quite of another spirit and temper from what they were before. "We who before-time (says Justin Martyr,[y] speaking of the converting power of the Christian doctrine) did please ourselves in fornications and uncleanness, do now solely embrace temperance and

[u] Apol. i. s. 15. [x] Leg. pro Christ. s. 32. [y] Apol. i. s. 15.

chastity: what an innumerable company could I name of those who have left their luxury and intemperance, and come over to this kind of life; for Christ came, not to call the chaste and righteous, [they needed it not,] but the wicked, the incontinent and the unrighteous, to repentance." And in his other apology,[z] he gives an instance of a woman, who having, together with her husband, lived a very vicious and debauched course of life, after her conversion to Christianity became strictly chaste and sober; and not content with this, she urged her husband also to do the like, laying before him the doctrines of Christianity, and persuading him both by the rewards and punishments of another world; but he obstinately refusing, it begot a quarrel between them, which still ripened into a wider breach, till it became matter of public cognizance, and was an occasion for Justin Martyr to write that excellent Apology for the Christians. Upon this account, Tertullian[a] justly condemns the madness of the heathens, and their unreasonable prejudice against Christianity, that they would hate their nearest relations merely for being Christians, though they saw how much they were every way bettered by it in their lives and manners. The father disinheriting his son, of whom now he had no cause left to complain, but that he was a Christian: the master imprisoning his servant, though now he had found him useful and necessary to him. But (what is more especially to the purpose) he tells us of some husbands he knew, who though before so infinitely jealous of their wives, (and possibly not without reason,) that a mouse could not stir in the room but it must be a gallant creeping to their bed, yet when upon their turning Christians they became so eminently reserved, chaste, and modest, that there was not the least foundation for suspicion, their jealousy was converted into hatred, and they vowed they had rather their wives should be strumpets than Christians. "So obstinately (says he) do men stand in their own light, and contend against those advantages which they might reap by Christianity." This argument from the powerful and successful influence of the Christian faith, Origen[b] frequently makes use of: they must needs (says he) confess the excellency and divinity of Christ's doctrine; whoever do but look into the lives of those who adhere to it, comparing their former course of life with that which they now lead, and considering in what

[z] Apol. ii. s. 2. [a] Ad Nation. l. i. c. 4. [b] Ad Cels. l. i. s. 26.

impurities, lusts, and wickednesses every one of them wallowed before they embraced this doctrine; but since that they entertained it, how much more grave, moderate, and constant are they become? insomuch that some of them, out of a desire of a more transcendent purity, and that they may worship God with a chaster mind, deny themselves even the pleasures of a lawful bed. The same he affirms elsewhere,[c] that those whom the Gentiles scorned, as the most rude and sottish persons, being once initiated into the faith and discipline of the Holy Jesus, were so far from lasciviousness, filthiness, and all manner of uncleanness, that (like priests wholly devoted to God) they altogether abstain even from allowed embraces: that there was no need for them (as some of the best among the Gentiles have done) to use arts and medicines to keep them chaste; not guardians set over them to preserve their virginity; the word of God being sufficient to expel and drive out all irregular appetites and desires. This also Tertullian[d] observes, as the incomparable excellency of the Christian doctrine above that of the best philosophers, that whenas Democritus was forced to put out his eyes, because not able to defend himself from the charms of beauty, a Christian could look upon a woman with chaste unseduced eyes, being at the same time inwardly blind as to any temptation from his lust. With such a mighty force did the gospel come and captivate men's hearts into the obedience of the truth. Thence Lactantius[e] makes this triumphant challenge, where discoursing of the prevalency which the commands of God had upon the minds of men, as daily experience did demonstrate: "Give me (says he) a man that is angry, furious, and passionate, and, with a few words from God, I will render him as meek and quiet as a lamb: give me one that is lustful, filthy, and vicious, and you shall see him sober, chaste, and continent." The same he instances in most other vices: "So great (says he) is the power of the divine wisdom, that being diffused into the breast of a man, it will soon expel that folly which is the grand parent of all vice and wickedness."

The innocency of Christians standing thus clear from this wicked imputation, it may not be amiss, before we conclude, to inquire a little into the rise and original of this absurd and

[c] Lib. vii. s. 48.

[d] Apol. c. 46.

[e] Lib. iii. de fals. sapient. c. 26.

malicious charge. Origen[f] fathers it upon the Jews, as if they had falsely and spitefully invented it, (as they did other things,) to disgrace and prejudice Christianity; and he tells us, that in some measure it succeeded accordingly, keeping many at a distance from the Christian religion; and that even in his time there were some who, for this very reason, would have no discourse or commerce with a Christian. But though both Jew and Gentile had malice and spite enough against the Christians, yet I can hardly think that it was a purely invented falsehood, but that it had some ground of pretence, though ill applied; and so we shall find it had: for which we are to know, that in the most early times of Christianity there were several sorts of heretics, (who though they had their particular names, yet all called themselves Christians, accounting that hereby they graced and honoured their party, as Epiphanius tells us,[g]) the followers of Simon Magus, Menander, Marcion, Marcus, Basilides, &c., who all went under the general name of Gnostics, and were, under the pretence of religion, guilty of the most prodigious villanies, and particularly those we are speaking of. Irenæus reports of them,[h] that they gave up themselves to all filthiness and bestiality; not only privately corrupting the women whom they had inveigled into their sect, (as some of them returning after to the church, confessed with shame and sorrow,) but openly, and with bare face, marrying the women whom they had seduced from their husbands; committing the most execrable wickedness, and laughing at the pious and orthodox Christians, whom the fear of God restrained from sin either in word or thought, as a company of ignorant and silly fellows; magnifying themselves, styling themselves perfect, and the seeds of election: and much more, in other places, to the same purpose, where he gives account of the profane and hellish rites of their assemblies. Of the Carpocratians, another gang of those brutish heretics, Clemens Alexandrinus relates the same,[i] both as to their doctrines and practices; reporting the matter almost in the very same circumstances wherein it is charged upon the Christians by the heathen in Minutius Felix, viz. that both men and women used to meet at supper, (which they had in imitation of the true Christian ἀγάπη, or "love-feast,") where, after they had loaded themselves with a

[f] Contr. Cels. l. vi. s. 27.
[g] Hæres. xxix. c. 6.
[h] Adv. Hæres. l. i. c. 1. vid. etiam, c. 9. et 32.
[i] Strom. l. iii. c. 2.

plentiful meal, to prevent all shame, (if they had any remained,) they put out the lights, and then promiscuously mixed in filthiness with one another, or else each sorting as they pleased. And of the Gnostics, Epiphanius tells us,[k] that they had their wives in common: and if any stranger of their party came to them, both men and women had this mark and sign to know one another by; stretching out their hands by way of salutation, they used to tickle each other in the ball of the hand, by which they were satisfied that the stranger really was of their gang and party. Amongst their brethren the Carpocratians,[l] they were wont to mark their disciples and proselytes under the right ear with a brand, a slit, or a hole, that they might the more readily discern them, (this agrees exactly with the charge of the heathens, that they knew one another at the first sight by privy marks and signs;) and having thus owned and received each other, they went to their luxurious feasts, and to those horrid brutishnesses that followed after.

Now this being the case with these abominable wretches, who yet had the face to call themselves Christians, it is no wonder if Jews and Gentiles, who were greedy of any occasion to bespatter and reproach Christians, and rather than not find an occasion would make one, charged it upon all Christians; either not knowing it to be otherwise, or, if they did, not willing to distinguish between true and false. And that this was the true and only rise and ground of the charge, besides some intimations of it in Justin Martyr,[m] we have it expressly asserted by Eusebius,[n] as that which gave being to that absurd and impious opinion, which spread so fast among the heathens, of the Christians being guilty of promiscuous mixtures, to the great reproach and infamy of the Christian name. I do not deny but this malicious report might receive strength and encouragement from the servants of some Christians, who, being racked by the heathens, might confess what they put into their mouths, and this charge amongst the rest. This, the same historian[o] relates out of the letters of the churches in France: certain Gentiles, who were servants to some Christians, being apprehended, and having seen the exquisite torments which the Christians were put to, for fear of the like, did, at the instance of the soldiers,

[k] Hæres. xxvi. c. 4. [l] Hæres. xxvii. c. 5. [m] Apol. i. s. 7. 14.
[n] Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 7. [o] Lib. v. c. 1.

who urged them to it, confess, that the Christians had amongst them incestuous mixtures, and suppers furnished with man's flesh; laying such things to their charge as they held unlawful to speak or think of, or could believe were ever done by men: which being once divulged, they every where fell upon the Christians with the greatest rage and fierceness. So, in the persecution under Maximinus,[p] one of the commanders that then resided at Damascus laid hold of a few light inconsiderable women in the market, and threatening them with the rack, forced the wretches publicly to confess that they had formerly been Christians, and that they knew all their villanies; that in their religious meetings they committed the most beastly actions; and, indeed, whatever else he would have them say, that might disgrace Christianity. This confession of theirs he caused to be entered into the public records, and then transmitted it to the emperor, by whose command it was immediately published in all cities and places of the empire: so industriously did the malice of men and devils bend all the nerves of their power and subtilty (though in vain) either wholly to suppress, or at least to dishearten and baffle out the Christians. Which brings me to the consideration of another virtue, no less remarkable in the Christians of those times.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THEIR READINESS AND CONSTANCY IN PROFESSING THEIR RELIGION.

Their courage and undauntedness in professing the truth, though reproached and persecuted. Their open and resolute owning it to the face of their enemies, and in defiance of the greatest dangers. The story of Victorinus, the rhetorician, converted by Simplician. The free and impartial answers of Maris to Julian, of Basil to the Arian governor. Polycarp's refusing to fly, when officers were sent to apprehend him. His resolute carriage before the proconsul. The like of Cyprian. No torments could make them deny Christ. Women unconquerable. The excellent instance of Blandina and others. Divers voluntarily offering themselves. Others offering to plead the cause of the Christians, though with the immediate hazard of their lives. This boldness and resolution noted as an argument of the excellency of their religion, and the goodness of their cause above that of the best philosophers. Aristotle's flying for

[p] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. ix. c. 5.

fear of suffering for his opinions. The cowardly silence of Jamblichus's scholars. This resolution of theirs confessed by heathens—Pliny, Apollo's oracle in the case of Porphyry's wife, Galen. The constancy of Christians to their religion proverbial.

When our blessed Saviour sent out his disciples to preach the gospel, he acquainted them with the difficulties that were like to attend their message; but, withal, bade them arm themselves with constancy and resolution, and not to regard the scoffs and reproaches, the miseries and sufferings, that might fall upon them; "not to fear them that could only kill the body," but to make a free and bold confession of his name before the world, and cheerfully to "take up their cross, and follow him." And St. Paul, though himself then in chains at Rome, exhorts the Christians to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, being in nothing terrified by their adversaries, it being given them on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;" which made it very necessary for them to have their "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." And, certainly, if ever true courage and greatness of mind appeared in any persons in the world, it was in the Christians of those times; who, with such a generous and unterrified mind defied dangers and torments, owned and gloried in the profession of Christianity against all the threats, reproaches, and persecutions which the worst of their adversaries could make against them. We shall first see what account their apologists give of it even before their enemies, and then how they made it good in their lives and actions.

Justin Martyr,[q] speaking of the successful propagation of the gospel, immediately upon Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, "the apostles of Christ, (says he,) going forth from Jerusalem, preached the powerful word in every place; although it were capital either to preach or to profess the name of Christ, which yet we do every where embrace and teach: which if you (as enemies) still go on to obstruct, the worst you can do is but to kill us, whereby you will do us no great harm, but will purchase to yourselves, and to all those that unjustly persecute us, and persist impenitent in their proceedings, the vengeance of eternal flames." And when Trypho the Jew[r] had charged Christianity for an idle story, and the Christians for no better than fools, to

[q] Apol. i. s. 45.

[r] Dial. cum Tryph. s. 9.

quit all the conveniencies of this life upon the account of it; the Martyr answers, that this proceeded from his ignorance, and an implicit assent to the absurd and malicious insinuations of their rabbins, who understood very little of the scriptures; that, would he but admit the true reasons of Christianity, he would quickly understand how far they were from being in an error, and how little reason they had to quit their profession; although men did sufficiently scorn and reproach them for it, and the powers of the world endeavour to force them to renounce and forsake it: notwithstanding all which,[s] they chose rather to die, and cheerfully underwent it; being fully assured, that what God had promised through Christ, he would infallibly make good to them. And discoursing afterwards of the same matter, "as for us (says he[t]) that have entertained the religion of the Holy Jesus, yourselves know very well, that there is none throughout the world that is able to subdue or affright us out of our profession; nothing being plainer, than that though our heads be exposed to swords and axes, our bodies fastened to the cross, though thrown to wild beasts, harassed out with chains, fire, and all other instruments of torment, yet do we not start from our profession: nay, the more these things happen to us, the faster others flock over to the name of Jesus, and become pious and devout followers of Christ; it being with us, in this case, as with a vine, which being pruned and trimmed, and its luxurious excrescences pared off, brings forth more fruitful and flourishing branches." How little he valued any danger in competition with the truth, he tells his adversary he might know by this,[u] that he would not stifle and conceal it, although they should immediately tear him in pieces for it; and, therefore, when he saw his countrymen, the Samaritans, seduced by the impostures of Simon Magus, whom they held to be a god "above all principality and power," he could not but by an address make his complaint to Cæsar, not regarding the hazards and troubles that might ensue upon it. Tertullian,[x] giving the heathens an account of that Christ whom they worshipped, tells them they might well believe it to be true; for that no man might lie for his religion, to dissemble in this case being to deny; a thing which could not be charged upon the Christians, who

[s] Dial. cum Tryph. s. 96.
[t] Ibid. s. 110.
[u] Ibid. s. 120.
[x] Apol. c. 21.

owned and stood to it with their last drop of blood. "We speak it, (says he,) and we speak it openly; yea, while you are tearing our flesh and shedding our blood, we cry aloud, that we worship God through Christ." So fully were they satisfied in the truth of their religion, as to be ready rather a thousand times to die, than to deny it.

Nor were these merely big words with which the Christians vapoured in the sight of their enemies; we shall find that they made them good by acting suitably to these professions and protestations. They did not then think it enough to espouse the faith of Christ, unless they publicly testified it to the world; whereof this instance amongst others:[y] Victorinus, a rhetorician of Rome, a man of so great note and fame that he had obtained the honour of a public statue, but a zealous defender of paganism and idolatry, had read the holy scriptures, by which being convinced, he came to Simplician, and privately told him that he was a Christian; which the other refused to believe, unless he saw him testify it in the public church; to which Victorinus returned, with a little scorn, "What are they then the walls that make a Christian?" This answer he as oft returned as the other urged a public confession, for he was not willing to disoblige his great friends, who he knew would fall foul upon him: till by reading and meditation he gathered courage, and fearing that Christ would deny him before the holy angels, if he should refuse to confess him before men, he became sensible of his fault, and was ashamed of his vanity and folly; and calling to Simplician, "Let us go (said he) into the church, I will now become a Christian;" which when he had done, and had been thoroughly instructed in the faith of Christ, he offered himself to baptism: and being to make the accustomed confession of his faith, the ministers of the church offered him the liberty of doing it in a more private way, (as they were wont to do for those who were of a fearful and bashful temper,) which he utterly refused, and openly made it before all the people; affirming it to be unreasonable that he should be ashamed to confess his hopes of salvation before the people, who, while he taught rhetoric, (wherein he hoped for no such reward,) had publicly professed it every day: an action that begat great wonder in Rome, as it was no less matter of rejoicing to the church. No dangers could then sway good men from doing of their duty. Cyprian[z] highly commends Cornelius

[y] Aug. Conf. l. viii. c. 2.

[z] Ad Antonian. Epist. lv. p. 105.

for taking the bishopric of Rome upon him in so dangerous a time; for the greatness of his mind, and the unshaken firmness of his faith, and the undaunted managery of his place, at a time when Decius the tyrant threatened such heavy severities to the ministers of Christianity, and would sooner endure a corrival in the empire, than a bishop to sit at Rome. How freely, how impartially did they speak their minds, even to the faces of their bitterest enemies? When Maris,[a] bishop of Chalcedon, a man blind with age, met Julian the emperor, he boldly charged him with his atheism, and apostacy from the Christian faith; Julian reproached him with his blindness, and told him his Galilean God would never cure him. To which the good old man presently answered, "I thank my God, who has taken away my sight, that I might not behold the face of one that has lapsed into so great impiety."

Were they at any time attempted by arts of flattery and enticement, the charms would not take place upon them. So when Julian,[b] both by himself and the officers of his army, set upon the soldiers, and by fair promises of preferments and rewards sought to fetch them off from Christianity, though he prevailed upon some few weak and instable minds, yet the far greatest part stood off; yea, by many, even of the meanest and most inconsiderable quality, his temptations were as resolutely beaten back, as the blow of an engine is by a wall of marble. Nor were they any more shaken by storms and threatenings. When Modestus, the governor under Valens the Arian emperor, could not by any means bring over St. Basil to the party, he threatened him with severity:[c] "Dost thou not fear this power that I have?" "Why should I fear?" said Basil; "what canst thou do, or what can I suffer?" The other answered, "The loss of thy estate, banishment, torment, and death." "But threaten us with something else, if thou canst," said Basil, "for none of these things can reach us; confiscation of estate cannot hurt him that has nothing to lose, unless thou wantest these tattered and threadbare garments, and a few books, wherein all my estate lies; nor can I be properly banished, who am not tied to any place: wherever I am it will be my country; the whole earth is God's, in which I am but a pilgrim and a stranger. I fear no torments, my body not being able to hold out beyond the first

[a] Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 12.
[b] Naz. Orat. in Jul. i. p. 75.
[c] Id. in laud. Basil. Orat. xx. p. 349, 350.

stroke; and for death, it will be a kindness to me, for it will but so much the sooner send me unto God, for whose sake I live, and am indeed in a great measure already dead, towards which I have been a long time hastening. And there is no reason to wonder at this freedom of speech, in other things we are meek and yielding; but when the cause of God and religion is concerned, overlooking all other things, we direct our thoughts only unto him; and then fire and sword, wild beasts and engines to tear off our flesh, are so far from being a terror, that they are rather a pleasure and recreation to us. Reproach and threaten, and use your power to the utmost, yet let the emperor know, that you shall never be able to make us assent to your wicked doctrine, no, though you should threaten ten thousand times worse than all this." The governor was strangely surprised with the spirit and resolution of the man, and went and told the emperor, "that one poor bishop was too hard for them all." And indeed so big were their spirits with a desire to assert and propagate their religion, that they would not hide their heads to decline the greatest dangers. When the officers were sent to apprehend St. Polycarp,[d] and had with great industry and cruelty found out the place where he was, though he had timely notice to have escaped by going into another house, yet he refused, saying, "The will of the Lord be done;" and coming down out of his chamber, saluted the officers with a cheerful and pleasant countenance. As they were carrying him back, two persons of eminency and authority met him in the way, took him up into their chariot, laboured by all means to persuade him to do sacrifice; which when he absolutely refused, after all their importunities, they turned their kindness into reproaches, and tumbled him with so much violence out of the chariot, that he was sorely bruised with the fall; but nothing daunted, as if he had received no harm, he cheerfully went on his way, a voice being heard as he went along, as it were from heaven, "Polycarp, be strong, and quit thyself like a man." When he came before the tribunal, the proconsul asked him, whether he was Polycarp? which he presently confessed: then he attempted, by all arts of persuasion, to urge him to deny Christ, or to do but something that might look like it; but all in vain: "These fourscore and six years (says he) have I served Christ,

[d] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 15.

and he never did me any harm; and how then can I blaspheme my Master and my Saviour?" Being urged to swear by the emperor's genius; he replied, "Forasmuch as thou pressest me to do this, pretending thou knowest not who I am, know, I am a Christian." Then the proconsul told him, he would throw him to the wild beasts, unless he altered his opinion: "Call for them, (answered Polycarp,) for we have no mind to change from better to worse:" as counting that change only to be honest and laudable, which is from vice to virtue. "But if thou makest so light of wild beasts, (added the proconsul,) I will have a fire that shall tame thee." To which the good old man returned, "You threaten, sir, a fire that will burn for an hour, and presently be extinguished; but know not that there is a fire of eternal damnation in the judgment to come, reserved for the punishment of all wicked men: but why delay you? Execute whatever you have a mind to." This, and much more to the same purpose, he discoursed of, to the great admiration of the proconsul; being so far from being terrified with what was said to him, that he was filled with joy and cheerfulness; and a certain grace and loveliness overspread his face.

So, likewise, when Cyprian was brought before the proconsul:[e] "Thou art (said he) Thascius Cyprian, who hast been a ringleader to men of a wicked mind; the emperor commands thee to do sacrifice, and therefore consult thy welfare." To which he answered, "I am Cyprian, I am a Christian, and I cannot sacrifice to your gods; do therefore what you are commanded: as for me, in so just a cause there needs no consultation." And when the sentence was pronounced against him, he cried out, "I heartily thank Almighty God, who is pleased to free me from the chains of this earthly carcase." Had torments and the very extremities of cruelty been able to sink their courage, it had soon been trodden under foot; but it was triumphant in the midst of torments, and lift up its head higher, the greater the loads that were laid upon it: whereof there are instances enough in the histories of the church; nay, in this triumph, even the weaker sex bore no inconsiderable part. Eusebius tells us[f] (among others that suffered in the French persecution under M. Aurelius) of one Blandina, a good woman, but of whom the church was afraid how she would hold out to make a resolute

[e] Act. Passion. Cypr. in vit. ejus, p. 13.

[f] Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 1.

confession, by reason of the weakness of her body, and the tenderness of her education, that when she came to it she bore up with such invincible magnanimity, that her tormentors, though they took their turns from morning to night, and plied her with all kinds of racks and tortures, were yet forced to give over, and confess themselves overcome, wondering that a body so broken and mangled should yet be able to draw its breath. But this noble *athleta* gained strength by suffering, she eased and refreshed herself, and mitigated the sense of present pain by repeating these words, "I am a Christian, and no evil is done by us." Nor did they only generously bear these things for the sake of their religion, when they were laid upon them, but many times freely offered themselves, confessing themselves to be Christians, when they knew that their confession would cost their lives.[g] So did those noble martyrs, whom Eusebius saw at Thebais, multitudes having been executed every day, with all imaginable cruelties; sentence was no sooner passed against one party of them, but others presented themselves before the tribunal, and confessed that they were Christians, receiving the fatal sentence with all possible expressions of cheerfulness and rejoicing. The same which he also reports of six young men that suffered in Palestine,[h] spontaneously addressing themselves to the governor of the province, owning that they were Christians, and ready to undergo the severest punishments. In the Acts of St. Cyprian's passion,[i] we are told, that the president having caused a mighty furnace to be filled with burning lime, and fire with heaps of frankincense round about the brim of it, gave the Christians this choice, either to burn the frankincense in sacrifice to Jupiter, or to be thrown into the furnace; whereupon three hundred men, being armed with an unconquerable faith, and confessing Christ to be the Son of God, leaped into the midst of the fiery furnace, with whose fumes and vapours they were immediately suffocated and swallowed up.

There wanted not some, who in the hottest persecutions durst venture to undertake the cause of Christians, and to plead it before the face of their bitterest enemies: thus did Vettius Epagathus,[k] a man full of zeal and piety, who seeing his fellow-Christians unjustly dragged before the judgment-seat, required

[g] Orig. contr. Cels. l. ii. s. 18.
[h] Euseb. de Martyr. Palæst. c. 3.
[i] In vit. ejus. p. 12.
[k] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 1.

leave of the president, that he might plead his brethren's cause, and openly shew that they were not guilty of the least wickedness and impiety; but not daring to grant him so reasonable a request, the judge took the advantage of asking him, whether he was a Christian? which he publicly owning, was adjudged to the same martyrdom with the rest. Of Origen we read,[l] that though then but eighteen years of age, yet he was wont not only to wait upon the martyrs in prison, but to attend upon them at their trials, and the times of their execution, kissing and embracing them, and boldly preaching and professing the faith of Christ; insomuch, that had he not been many times miraculously preserved, the Gentiles had pelted him to death with stones; for they mortally hated him for his industrious and undaunted propagation of the faith. Nay, when but a boy,[m] and his father Leontius was seized upon, he wrote to his father, most earnestly pressing him to persevere unto martyrdom, and not to concern himself what might become of his wife and children, nor for their sakes to decline that excellent cause he was engaged in.

By this free and cheerful undergoing the greatest miseries rather than deny or prejudice their religion, Christians evidently demonstrated the goodness of their principles, and shewed they were no such persons as their enemies commonly looked upon them; that a Christian (as Ignatius observes[n]) is not the child of fancy and persuasion, but of true gallantry and greatness of spirit, having so much hatred of the world to grapple and contend with. "Those who are malefactors, (as Tertullian argues,[o]) desire to be concealed, and shun to appear; being apprehended, they tremble; being accused, they deny; being racked, do not easily nor always confess the truth; however, being condemned, they are sad, search into and censure themselves, are unwilling to acknowledge their wickednesses to be their own, and accordingly impute them either to their fate or stars. But what is there like this to be found in Christians? Amongst them, no man is ashamed, none repents him of being a Christian, unless it be that he was no sooner so: if marked out, he glories; if accused, he stands not to defend himself; being interrogated, he confesses of his own accord; being condemned, he gives thanks. What evil then can there be in this, which is so far from having any

[l] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 2.
[m] Ibid.
[n] Epist. ad Roman. s. 3.
[o] Apol. c. 1.

shadow of evil, any fear, shame, tergiversation, repentance, deplorableness, to attend it? What evil can that be, of which he that is guilty rejoices? of which to be accused is their vote and desire? and for which to be punished is their happiness and felicity?" This, likewise, Arnobius[p] lays down as a grand evidence of the divinity of the Christian faith, that in so short a time it had conquered so much of the world, subdued men of the greatest parts and learning, made them willing to quit their beloved opinions, to forfeit their estates, to part with their ease and pleasures, and to submit to torments rather than violate the faith of Christ, or start from the station they had entered upon. By this excellent temper and carriage they admirably triumphed over the best men amongst the Gentiles, none of whom durst engage so deep for the defence of their dearest sentiments, as the Christians did for theirs: witness Plato, who set up the academy, and brought in an obscure and ambiguous way of delivering his opinions, lest by speaking out he should fall under the sentence and the fate of Socrates. Thus Origen puts Celsus in mind of Aristotle,[q] who, understanding that the Athenians intended to call him to account for some of his (as they thought them) unorthodox opinions, immediately removed his school, saying to his friends, "Let us be gone from Athens, lest we give them an occasion of being guilty of a second wickedness, like to that which they committed against Socrates, and lest they again offend against the majesty of philosophy:" it being, alas, not kindness to the Athenians, but cowardice and fear of punishment, made him so hastily pack up and be gone, and leave his opinions behind him to shift for themselves as well as they could. Nay, Eunapius himself confesses,[r] that in the time of Constantine, when paganism began to go down the wind, and Christianity to be advanced and honoured, their best philosophers, the great scholars of Jamblichus, took sanctuary at a mysterious secrecy, and wisely kept their *dogmata* and opinions to themselves, sealed up under a profound and religious silence. No, they were the Christians only, the very meanest of whom durst stand by and defend naked truth in the face of danger and death itself; this being (as Eusebius notes[s]) one of the most wonderful things in Christian religion, that they who embrace it are not

[p] Adv. gent. l. ii.
[q] Cont. Cels. l. i. s. 65.
[r] In vit. Ædesii.
[s] Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 3.

only ready to profess it in words, but entertain it with such a mighty affection and sincerity of soul, as willingly to prefer the bearing testimony to it, even before life itself. And indeed this piece of right is done them by Pliny himself,[t] where speaking of some who having been accused for Christians, to shew how far they were from it, readily blasphemed Christ, and sacrificed to the gods; he adds, "none of which it is said that they who are truly Christians can by any means be compelled to do." Nay, thus much is confessed by the oracle itself: for when Porphyry, the great philosopher, and acute enemy of the Christians, inquired of Apollo's oracle what god he should make his address to for the recovery of his wife back from Christianity, the oracle returned him this answer, (as himself reported in his book, *περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας*, not *θεολογία φιλοσοφίας*, as it is corruptly in St. Augustine,[u] a book frequently cited both by Eusebius[x] and Theodoret; where, by the way, in the Latin version of Theodoret,[y] it is by a strange mistake rendered *de electorum philosophia*, as if it had been *ἐκλογῶν*: in this book concerning the philosophy drawn from oracles, he tells us he received this answer,) "that he might as well, and to better purpose, attempt to write upon the surface of the water, or to fly like a bird in the air, than to reduce his wife from those wicked sentiments she had taken in." And this was so common and notorious, that it became in a manner proverbial: whence that of Galen, when he would express how pertinaciously the philosophers adhered to those sentiments they had once drunk in, and how very hard and almost impossible it was to convince them; "sooner (says he[z]) may a man undeceive a Jew or a Christian, and make them renounce the doctrines of Moses or of Christ, than philosophers and physicians that are once addicted to their several sects."

CHAPTER VII.

OF THEIR EXEMPLARY PATIENCE UNDER SUFFERINGS.

Christianity likely to engage its followers in suffering, and why. Continual edicts put forth against Christians. The form of those imperial orders exemplified out of the Acts

[t] Epist. xcvii. l. x.
[u] Apud August. de civ. Dei, l. xix. c. 23.
[x] De præpar. Evang. l. iv.
[y] De curand. Græc. affect.
[z] Galen. *περὶ διαφ. σφυγμῶν*, l. iii. vol. iii. fol. 18. p. 2.

of the Martyrs. The fierce opposition of the Roman emperors, and their probable hopes of having destroyed Christianity, evidenced from several inscriptions to that purpose found in Spain. The greatness of the torments Christians endured; some of the ordinary kinds of them described. The cross; the pain and ignominy of it; persons crucified with their heads downwards. The rack, what. *Catasta: ad Pulpitum post Catastam. Ungulæ:* one of these kept and adored as a relic at Rome. The wheel. Burning. Throwing to wild beasts. Being condemned to mines; their treatment there, and the case of such persons. Some of the extraordinary ways of punishment used towards Christians. Torn asunder by branches of trees: burnt in pitched coats: boiled in pots of oil or lead, &c. Their carriage under their sufferings sedate and calm, meek and patient. Their refusing to make use of opportunities to avoid suffering. Whether they might fly and withdraw in times of persecution: allowed and practised in some cases; two instanced in. Where persons were of more than ordinary use and eminency. Where they were weak for the present, and not like to hold out. Proved by particular instances. Their cheerful offering themselves to the rage and fury of their enemies, confessed by the relation of their judges and bitterest adversaries, Tiberianus, Arrius Antonius, Lucian. The earnest desire of martyrdom in Ignatius, Laurentius, Origen, and others. When unjustly condemned, their judges thanked for condemning them. Their glorying in suffering and being crucified. Babylas the martyr's chains buried with him. No signs of an impatient mind under their bitterest torments. An account of their cheerful suffering out of Cyprian. Their patience wondered at by their enemies. Their grand support under suffering; the hopes and assurance of a reward in heaven. The case of the forty martyrs in St. Basil. Psalms sung at the funeral of Christians, and lights carried before the corpse, and why. Christianity vastly increased by the patience and constancy of Christians: Justin Martyr's account of his conversion by this means. Julian generally refused to put Christians to death, and why. The testimonies of several heathens concerning the Christians' courage and patience under sufferings.

That the Christian religion, at its first appearing in the world, was likely to engage its followers in miseries and sufferings, could not be unknown to any that considered the nature of its doctrine, and the tendency of its design. The severity of its precepts so directly opposite to the corrupt and vicious inclinations of men, the purity of its worship so flatly contrary to the loose and obscene rites and solemnities of the heathens, its absolute inconsistency with those religions which had obtained for so many ages, which then had such firm possession of the minds of men, and all the powers and policies of the world to secure and back them, could not prophecy to it any kind of welcome entertainment. This sect (for so they called it) was every where not only spoken, but fought against: for since men have a natural veneration for antiquity, and especially in matters of religion, they thought themselves concerned to defend that way that had been conveyed to them from their ancestors, and to set themselves, with might and main, against whatever might oppose it:

especially the great ones of those times, and the Roman emperors, made it their master-design to oppress and stifle this infant religion, and to banish it out of the world. Hence those imperial orders that were daily sent abroad into all parts of the empire, to command and empower their governors to ruin and destroy the Christians; of which, that we may the better apprehend the form of them, it may not be amiss to set down one or two of them out of the Acts of the Martyrs. This following was agreed upon, both by the emperors and the whole senate of Rome.[a] "Decius and Valerian, emperors, triumphers, conquerors, august, pious, together with the whole senate, have by common consent decreed thus: Whereas we have received the gifts and blessings of the gods, by whom we enjoy victory over our enemies, as also temperate seasons, and fruits in great plenty and abundance; since we have found them our great benefactors, and to supply us with those things that are universally beneficial to all, we therefore unanimously decree, that all orders of men, as well children as servants, soldiers as private persons, shall offer sacrifices to the gods, doing reverence and supplication to them. And if any shall dare to violate our divine order thus unanimously agreed upon, we command that he be cast into prison, and afterwards exposed to several kinds of torments: if by this means he be reclaimed, he may expect no mean honours from us; but if he shall persist contumacious, after many tortures, let him be beheaded, or thrown into the sea, or cast out to be devoured by dogs and birds of prey: but especially if there be any found of the religion of the Christians. As for those that obey our decrees, they shall receive great honours and rewards from us. So happily fare ye well."

To this we may add that short rescript of Valerian:[b] "Valerian the emperor to the ministers and governors of provinces. We understand that the precepts of the laws are violated by those who in these days call themselves Christians. Wherefore we will, that, apprehending them, unless they sacrifice to our gods, you expose them to divers kinds of punishments; that so both justice may have place without delay, and vengeance, in cutting off impieties, having attained its end, may proceed no further." This course they prosecuted with so much vigour and

[a] Metaphrast. in Martyr. S. Mercur. apud Sur. ad 24 Novemb.

[b] Act. Symphor. apud Sur. ad 22 Aug.

fierceness, that some of them boasted that they had absolutely effected their design. Witness those trophies and triumphal arches that were every where erected to perpetuate the memory of their conquest over Christianity; whereof these two inscriptions, found at Clunia in Spain, are a sufficient evidence:[c] DIOCLETIANUS. JOVIUS. ET. MAXIMIAN. HERCULEUS. CAES. AUGG. AMPLIFICATO. PER. ORIENTEM. ET. OCCIDENTEM. IMP. ROM. ET. NOMINE. CHRISTIANORUM. DELETO. QUI. REMP. EVERTEBANT. The other:[d] DIOCLETIAN. CAES. AUG. GALERIO. IN. ORIENTE. ADOPT. SUPERSTITIONE. CHRIST—UBIQ. DELETA. ET. CULTU. DEOR. PROPAGATO. The meaning of both which is to shew, that Dioclesian and his colleague Maximianus had every where extinguished the wicked superstition of Christ, so pernicious to the commonwealth, and had restored paganism and the worship of the gods. But long before them we find Nero (the first emperor that raised persecution against the Christians, as Tertullian notes) so active in the business, as to glory (or some flatterers in his behalf) that he had done the work. Witness an inscription found also in Spain:[e] NERONI. CL. CAIS. AUG. PONT. MAX. OB. PROVINC. LATRONIB. ET. HIS. QUI. NOVAM. GENERI. HUM. SUPERSTITION. INCULCAB. PURGATAM. . . . . This inscription was set up in memory of his having purged the country of robbers, and such as had introduced and obtruded a new superstition upon mankind. The Christians, it is true, are not particularly named in it, (probably the Gentiles so much detested the very name of Christian, that, especially in public monuments, they would not mention it,) yet can it be meant of no other. For besides that this character of inculcating their superstition admirably agrees to Christians, who sought by all means to instil their principles into the minds of men; besides that superstition was the common title by which the Gentiles were wont to denote Christianity; besides this, there was not (as Baronius observes[f]) any other new religion at that time, or long before or after, that appeared in this world; to be sure, none that could be the object of Nero's persecution: and how he entertained this, Tertullian sufficiently intimates,[g] bidding them search their own records, and they would find. And, from this very inscription alone, it is evident they thought, that (at least in that part of the world) they had wholly extirpated and rooted it out. By

[c] Gruter. Inscript. p. 280. n. 3.
[d] Ibid. n. 4.
[e] Ibid. p. 238. n. 9.
[f] Ad Ann. Chr. 69.
[g] Apol. c. 5.

all which we may guess, what hot service the Christians had of it under those primitive persecutions. Indeed, their sufferings were beyond all imagination great, which yet did but so much the more exercise and advance their patience, the bitterness of their sufferings making their patience more eminent and illustrious: of which, that we may take the truer measures, it will be necessary to consider these two things, the greatness of those torments and sufferings which the Christians generally underwent, and then the manner of their carriage under them.

For the first, the greatness of those torments and sufferings which they underwent, they were as bad as the wit and malice of either men or devils could invent: in the consideration whereof we shall first take a view of those punishments which were more standing and ordinary, familiarly used amongst the Greeks and Romans, and then of such as were extraordinarily made use of towards the Christians. Amongst their ordinary methods of execution, these six were most eminent; the cross, the rack, the wheel, burning, wild beasts, condemning to mines.

I. The cross deserves the first place in our account, not only as having been one of the most ancient and universal ways of punishment amongst the Gentiles, and from them brought in amongst the Jews, but as being the instrument by which our blessed Saviour himself was put to death. Omitting the various and different forms and kinds of it, which were all used towards the primitive Christians, I intend here only that that was most common, a straight piece of wood fixed in the ground, having a transverse beam fastened near the top of it, not unlike the letter T, though probably it had also a piece of wood arising above the top of it. And there were two things in this way of punishment which rendered it very severe, the pain and ignominy of it. Painful it must needs be, because the party suffering was fastened to it with nails driven through his hands and feet, which being the parts where the nerves and sinews terminate and meet together, must needs be most acutely sensible of wounds and violence: and because they were pierced only in these parts so far distant from the vitals, this made their death very lingering and tedious, doubled and trebled every pain upon them, insomuch that some, out of a generous compassion, have caused malefactors first to be strangled before they were crucified; as

Julius Cæsar[h] did towards the pirates, whom he had sworn to execute upon the cross. But no such favour was shewed to Christians:[i] they were suffered to remain in the midst of all those exquisite pangs, till mere hunger starved them, or the mercy of wild beasts or birds of prey despatched them. Thus St. Andrew[k] the apostle continued two whole days upon the cross, teaching the people all the while. Timotheus and his wife Maura,[l] after many other torments, hung upon the cross nine days together, before they completed their martyrdom. Nor was the shame of this way of suffering less than the pain of it, crucifixion being the peculiar punishment of slaves, traitors, and the vilest malefactors,[m] insomuch that for a freeman to die thus was accounted the highest accent of ignominy and reproach: therefore the Roman historian calls it *servile supplicium*, "a punishment proper to slaves." Sometimes they were crucified with their heads downwards: thus St. Peter is said to have been crucified;[n] thus those Egyptian martyrs, who hung in this posture till they were starved out of the world. But this punishment of the cross, soon after the world was become Christian, Constantine took away, out of reverence to our Saviour,[o] not being willing that that should be the punishmeut of the vilest malefactors which had been the instrument whereupon the Son of God had purchased salvation for mankind.

II. The rack, called in Latin *equuleus;* either from the situation of the offender's body upon the engine resembling a man on horseback, or rather from the horsing or holding of him up to it by ropes and screws.[p] The first design of it was to torment the guilty, or the suspected person, to make him confess the truth: what the particular form of it was, is not agreed amongst learned men; but this we may probably conceive, that it was an engine framed of several pieces of timber joined together, upon the top whereof, upon a long board, the suffering person being laid along upon his back, and fastened to it by his hands and feet, the engine was so contrived with screws and pullies, that all his members were distended with the utmost violence, even to a

[h] Sueton. in vit. Cæsar. c. 74.
[i] Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. viii. c. 8.
[k] Martyrol. Rom. ad diem 30 Nov. p. 736.
[l] Ibid. ad diem 3 Maii, p. 272.
[m] Vul. Gallic. in Avid. Cass. c. 4. Vid Lact. de ver. sap. c. 26.
[n] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 1. l. viii. c. 8.
[o] Sozom. l. i. c. 8.
[p] Cic. pro Deiotar. Vid. Gallon. de cruciat. martyr. c. 3.

luxation of all the parts; and this more or less, according to the tormentor's pleasures. Sometimes they were hung by the hands and feet, under the top-board of the engine, and tormented in that posture. This rack was a punishment which the Christians were very frequently put to. Much of the same nature was that which they called the *catasta*, being a piece of wood raised up like a little scaffold, upon which Christians were set, that their torments might be more conspicuous; thence that proverb in Cyprian,[q] *Ad pulpitum post catastam venire*, speaking of Aurelius, a confessor, who having been publicly tormented upon this engine, was after ordained a reader in the church, and promoted to read the scriptures out of the pulpit, as he had lately confessed Christ upon the scaffold. In this, as in that of the rack, there were certain additional torments made by instruments, called *ungulæ*, which were a kind of iron pincers, made with sharp teeth, with which the flesh was, by piece-meal, pulled and torn off their backs.

In the time of pope Paul the Third, one of these *ungulæ*, as the author of the *Roma Subterranea* tells us,[r] was, amongst other things, found in the Vatican cemetery amongst the monuments of the martyrs, and laid up amongst the other relics of that church as an inestimable treasure, and a worthy object of religious worship; being there kept to be seen and adored by all Christian people. And another of their writers,[s] being about to describe it, tells us, that though altogether unworthy of such a favour, yet he was blessed with the sight of it, and that (as became him) he kissed and embraced it with great veneration. Which, by the way, seems to me a little strange, that it should be accounted an honour and a kindness done to the martyrs, to adore that which was the instrument of their torment. Might they not, by the same reason, as well worship their executioners, and pay a religious respect to the ashes of those who dragged them to the stake, tore off their flesh, and put them to death with all imaginable pain and torture?

III. The wheel. This was a round engine, to which the body of the condemned person being bound, was not only extremely distended, but whirled about with the most violent distortion; the pain whereof was inconceivable, especially as used towards

[q] Epist. xxxviii. ad Presb. et Diac. p. 75.

[r] Rom. Subter. l. ii. c. 4. n. 16.

[s] Gallon. de cruciat. martyr. c. 5.

the primitive Christians: the wheel, to which they were bound naked, being sometimes full of iron pricks, sometimes a board full of sharp-pointed iron pricks being placed under it; so that every time the body of the martyr came to it, they raked off the flesh with inexpressible torment. Thus were served those three martyrs,[t] Felix the presbyter, Fortunatus and Achilleus the deacons, at Valentia in France, and hundreds more in other places.

IV. Burning. This was done sometimes by staking them down to a pile of wood, and setting it on fire. Thus suffered Julianus and others in the persecution at Alexandria.[u] Sometimes by laying them to roast at a slow gentle fire, that they might die with the greater torment. Otherwhiles they were hung up, either by the neck, hands, or feet, and a fire made under them, either to burn or choke them. Or burning torches held to several parts of their naked bodies. Sometimes they were placed in an iron chair, or laid upon an iron grate, which was either made red hot, or had a fire continually burning under it. Of all which ways of execution, and some other near akin to them, were it not too tedious I could easily give abundant instances. This was accounted one of the prime ways of capital punishments, and none were adjudged to it but the greatest villains, the meanest and vilest persons.[x]

V. Throwing to wild beasts. This was a punishment very common amongst the Romans,[y] to condemn a man to fight for his life with the most savage beasts—bears, leopards, lions, &c. and was usually the portion of the vilest and most despicable offenders; under which notion the Gentiles looking upon the Christians, did most commonly condemn them to this kind of death: a thing so familiar, that it became in a manner proverbial,[z] *Christianos ad leones*, "away with the Christians to the lions." And that they might be devoured with the more ease, they were many times tied down to a stake; sometimes clothed in beasts' skins, the more eagerly to provoke the rage and fury of the wild beasts against them.

VI. Condemning to the mines. To these the Romans ad-

[t] Mart. Rom. ad diem April. 23. p. 249.
[u] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 4.
[x] Leg. 28. Præf. et sect. 11. ff. de pœnis.
[y] Leg. 3. sect. 5. ff. lib. xlviii. tit. viii. ad leg. Corn. de sicar. et ven.
[z] Tert. Apol. c. 40.

judged their slaves, and the most infamous malefactors; and to this too the Christians were often sent. What their treatment was in those places, besides their continual toil and drudgery, Cyprian[a] lets us know, in a letter to Nemesian, and the rest that laboured in the mines; viz. that they were cruelly beaten with clubs, bound with chains, forced to lie upon the hard, cold, damp ground, conflicted with hunger, nakedness, the deformity of their heads half shaved, after the manner of slaves, and forced to live in the midst of filth and nastiness. Besides which, they were wont to be marked and branded in the face,[b] to have their right eye pulled out, and their left foot disabled by cutting the nerves and sinews of it: not to say, that being once under this condemnation, all their estate was forfeit to the public treasury, and themselves for ever reduced into the condition of slaves. These were some of the more usual ways of punishment amongst the Romans, though exercised towards the Christians in their utmost rigour and severity. I omit to speak of Christians being scourged and whipped, even to the tiring of their executioners, especially with rods called *plumbatæ*, (whereof there is frequent mention in the Theodosian Code,) which were scourges made of cords or thongs, with leaden bullets at the end of them: of their being stoned to death; their being beheaded; their being thrust into stinking and nasty prisons, where they were set in a kind of stocks with five holes, their legs being stretched asunder to reach from one end to the other.

We shall now consider some few of those unusual torments and punishments which were inflicted only upon Christians, or (if upon any others) only in extraordinary cases. Such was their being tied to arms of trees, bent by great force and strength by certain engines, and being suddenly let go, did in a moment tear the martyr in pieces; in which way many were put to death in the persecution of Thebais.[c] Sometimes they were clad with coats of paper, linen, or such like, daubed in the inside with pitch and brimstone, which being set on fire, they were burnt alive. Otherwhiles they were shut into the belly of a brazen bull, and a fire being kindled under it, were consumed with a torment beyond imagination. Sometimes they

[a] Epist. lxxvi. ad Nemes. p. 231.
[b] Vid. leg. 8. sect. 4. ff. qui test. fac. possunt.
[c] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. viii. c. 9.

were put into a great pot or caldron full of boiling pitch, oil, lead, or wax mixed together; or had these fatal liquors, by holes made on purpose, poured into their bowels. Some of them were hung up by one or both hands, with stones of great weight tied to their feet to augment their sufferings. Others were anointed all over their bodies with honey, and at mid-day fastened to the top of a pole, that they might be a prey to flies, wasps, and such little cattle, as might by degrees sting and torment them to death. Thus, besides many others, it was with Marcus, bishop of Arethusa,[d] a venerable old man, who suffered under Julian the Apostate: after infinite other tortures, they daubed him over with honey and jellies, and, in a basket fastened to the top of a pole, exposed him to the hottest beams of the sun, and to the fury of such little insects as would be sure to prey upon him. Sometimes they were put into a rotten ship, which being turned out to sea was set on fire. Thus they served an orthodox presbyter under Valens the Arian emperor:[e] the same which Socrates[f] reports of fourscore pious and devout men, who, by the same emperor's command, were thrust into a ship, which, being brought into open sea, was presently fired; that so by this means they might also want the honour of a burial. And, indeed, the rage and cruelty of the Gentiles did not only reach the Christians while alive, but extend to them after death, denying them (what has been otherwise granted amongst the most barbarous people) the conveniency of burial, exposing them to the ravage and fierceness of dogs and beasts of prey; a thing which, we are told,[g] the primitive Christians reckoned as not the least aggravation of their sufferings. Nay, where they had been quietly buried, they were not suffered many times (as Tertullian[h] complains) to enjoy the asylum of the grave, but were plucked out, rent and torn in pieces.

But what purpose is it any longer to insist upon these things? Sooner may a man tell the stars, than reckon up all those methods of misery and suffering which the Christians endured. Eusebius,[i] who himself was a sad spectator of some of the later persecutions, professes to give over the account, as a thing beyond all possibility of expression; the manner of their sufferings, and the

[d] Naz. Or. i. in Jul. p. 89. [e] Id. Orat. xx. p. 416. [f] Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 16.
[g] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 1. et de Martyr. de Palæst. c. 9. [h] Apol. c. 37.
[i] Hist. Eccl. l. viii. c. 12.

persons that suffered, being hard, nay, impossible to be reckoned up. The truth is, (as he there observes, and Cyprian[k] plainly tells Demetrian of it,) their enemies did little else but set their wits upon the tenters to find out the most exquisite methods of torture and punishment; they were not content with those old ways of torment which their forefathers had brought in; but by an ingenious cruelty daily invented new, striving to excel one another in this piece of hellish art, and accounted those the wittiest persons that could invent the bitterest and most barbarous engines of execution. And in this they improved so much, that Ulpian, master of records to Alexander Severus the emperor, and the great oracle of those times for law, writing several books *De Officio Proconsulis*, (many parcels whereof are yet extant in the body of the civil law,) in the seventh book collected together the several bloody edicts which the emperors had put out against the Christians, that he might shew by what ways and methods they ought to be punished and destroyed, as Lactantius tells us.[l] But this book (as to what concerned Christians) is not now extant; the zeal and piety of the first Christian emperors having banished all books of that nature out of the world, as appears by a law of the emperor Theodosius,[m] where he commands the writings of Porphyry, and all others that had written against the Christian religion, to be burned: the reason why we have no more books of the heathens concerning the Christians extant at this day.

Having given this brief specimen of some few of those grievous torments to which the primitive Christians were exposed, (they that would have more must read the martyrologies of the church, or such as have purposely written on this subject,) we come next to consider what was their behaviour and carriage under them. This we shall find to have been most sedate and calm, most constant and resolute: they neither fainted nor fretted, neither railed at their enemies, nor sunk under their hands; but bore up under the heaviest torments, under the bitterest reproaches, with a meekness and patience that was invincible, and such as every way became the mild, and yet generous spirit of the gospel. So Justin Martyr tells the Jew:[n] "We patiently bear (says he) all the mischiefs which are brought upon us either by men or

[k] Cypr. ad Demetr. p. 190.
[l] De Justit. l. v. c. 11.
[m] Leg. 3. C. de Sum. Trin. s. 1.
[n] Dial. cum Tryph. s. 18.

devils, even to the extremities of death and torments; praying for those that thus treat us, that they may find mercy, not desiring to hurt or revenge ourselves upon any that injure us, according as our great Lawgiver has commanded us." Thus Eusebius,[o] reporting the hard usage which the Christians met with during the times of persecution, tells us, that they were betrayed and butchered by their own friends and brethren; but they, as courageous champions of the true religion, accustomed to prefer an honourable death in defence of the truth, before life itself, little regarded the cruel usage they met with in it: but rather, as became true soldiers of God, armed with patience, they laughed at all methods of execution, fire and sword, and the piercing of nails, wild beasts, and the bottom of the sea, cutting and burning of limbs, putting out eyes and mutilation of the whole body, hunger, and digging in mines, chains and fetters; all which, for the great love that they had to their Lord and Master, they accounted sweeter than any happiness or pleasure whatsoever. Nay, the very women in this case were as courageous as the men, many of whom, undergoing the same conflicts, reaped the same rewards of their constancy and virtue. But this will more distinctly appear in a few particular cases.

First, whenever they were sought for in order to their being condemned and executed, they cared not to make use of opportunities to escape. Polycarp, at his apprehension, refused to fly, though going but into the next house might have saved his life. Cyprian,[p] writing to the confessors, commends them, that when they were oft desired (I suppose he means by their Gentile friends and relations) to go out of prison, they chose rather to abide there still, than to make their own escape; telling them, they had made as many confessions as they had had opportunities to be gone, and had rejected them. Though (it is true) he himself withdrew from Carthage, when the officers were sent to take him and carry him to Utica, yet he did it (as he tells his people[q]) by the advice of some friends; but for this reason, that when he did suffer, he might suffer at Carthage, whereof he was bishop, and that those truths which he had preached to them in his life, he might seal before them with his blood: a thing he earnestly and daily begged of God, and which was granted to

[o] Orat. de laud. Const. c. 7. p. 622. [p] Epist. xxxvii. ad Mosen et Max. p. 72.
[q] Epist. lxxxi. ad Presb. et Diac. p. 238.

him afterwards. And if they did not run away from suffering, much less did they oppose it, and make tumults and parties to defend themselves; no, they were led as "lambs to the slaughter, and as sheep before the shearers are dumb, so opened not they their mouth, but committed their cause to him that judges righteously," and who has said, "vengeance is mine, and I will repay it." "None of us, (says Cyprian to the governor,[r]) when apprehended, makes resistance, nor (though our party be large and numerous) revenges himself for that unjust violence that you offer to us. We patiently acquiesce in the assurance of a future vengeance: the innocent truckle under the unrighteous; the guiltless quietly submit to pains and tortures: knowing for certain, that whatever we now suffer shall not remain unpunished; and that the greater the injury that is done us in these persecutions we endure, the more just and heavy will be that vengeance that will follow it." Never was any wicked attempt made against Christians, but a divine vengeance was soon at the heels of it. But though they thus resolutely stood to it, when the honour of their religion lay at stake, yet it must not be denied, that in some cases they held it lawful and convenient to fly in times of persecution. Tertullian,[s] indeed, in a book purposely written on this subject, maintains it to be simply and absolutely unlawful for Christians to fly at such a time; an assertion which, with all the subtilties of his wit, and the flourishes of his African eloquence, he endeavours to render fair and plausible. But, besides the strictness and rigid severity of the man at all times, this book was composed after his complying with the sect of the Montanists, whose peculiar humour it was to outdo the orthodox by overstraining the austerities of religion, as appears not only in this, but in the case of marriages, fasts, penances, and such like: otherwise, before his espousing those opinions, he seems elsewhere to speak more favourably of shunning persecution.[t] But whatever he thought in the case, it is certain the generality of the fathers were of another mind, that Christians might and ought to use prudence in this affair, and at some times withdraw to avoid the storm when it was a coming; especially in these two cases.

I. When persons were of more than ordinary use and eminency, the saving of whom might be of great advantage to the

[r] Ad Demetrian. p. 192. [s] Lib. de fug. in persecut. [t] De patient. c. 13.

church. "A Christian that flies in this case, (as Origen tells Celsus,[u]) does it not for fear, but in a prudent compliance with his Lord's direction, and with a design to keep himself undefiled, that he may be able to minister to the salvation of others:" thus St. Paul was let down the wall in a basket, when the governor of Damascus sought his life: thus Cyprian withdrew from Carthage, and lay hid for two years together, during which time he gave secret orders for governing of the church: thus Athanasius,[x] when Syrianus and his soldiers broke into the church to apprehend him, was, by the universal cry both of clergy and people, persuaded, and in a manner forced to retire and save himself, in which retirement he continued so long, that the Arians charged him with fear and cowardice; insomuch that, for his own vindication, he was forced to write an apology for himself, wherein he learnedly and eloquently discourses the whole affair, justifying himself from the instances of the Old Testament, of Jacob, Moses, David, Elias; from the example of Christ himself and his apostles in the New; from the plain and positive allowance of the gospel, "when they persecute you in one city, flee into another;" and that "when they should see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, (i. e. the miseries that were to come upon Jerusalem by the Roman army,) they should fly unto the mountains; and if upon the house top, or in the field, not turn back to fetch any thing that was left behind:" that it was necessary for the apostles to shun the storm, because they were the instruments immediately deputed to propagate and convey the gospel to the world; that they were herein initiated by the primitive saints and martyrs, "who wandered about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth;" being equally careful to avoid the two extremes of rashness and cowardice, they would neither thrust themselves upon danger, nor basely run from death when called to it, like wise physicians, reserving themselves for the use of those that needed their assistance. All which, and a great deal more, he rationally urges in that apology.

II. Another case wherein they accounted it lawful for persons to retire under persecutions was, when being but new converts, and as yet weak in the faith, they looked upon them as not likely to bear the shock and brunt of the persecution: in this

[u] Lib. viii. s. 44.

[x] Athan. Apol. de fug. sua, s. 1.

case they thought it better for them to withdraw for the present, than to put them under a temptation of being drawn back to paganism and idolatry. Thus when Gregory bishop of Neocæsarea[y] saw the Decian persecution grow extreme hot and violent, considering the frailty and infirmity of human nature, and how few would be able to bear up under those fierce conflicts that must be undergone for the sake of religion, persuaded his church a little to decline that dreadful and terrible storm, telling them it was a great deal better to save their souls by flying, than by abiding those furious trials to run the hazard of falling from the faith: and that his counsel might make the deeper impression upon them, and he might convince them that in thus doing there was no danger or prejudice to their souls, he resolved to shew them the way by his own example, and himself first retiring out of the reach of danger, retreated to the mountainous parts thereabouts that were freest from the rage and malice of the enemy. Nor was this any impeachment of their zeal and readiness for suffering, but only a prudent gaining a little respite for a time, that they might suffer with greater advantage afterwards. They did not desire to save their heads, when the honour of their religion called for it, nor ever by indirect means screwed themselves out of danger when once engaged in it, though they did sometimes prudently prevent it, reserving themselves for a more convenient season. Thus Cyprian withdrew a little, not out of fear of suffering, but a desire to prevent his being put to death in an obscure place, (which his enemies had designed,) being desirous his martyrdom should happen in that place where he so long lived, and so publicly preached the Christian faith.

Secondly, they were so far from declining suffering, and being terrified with those miseries which they saw others undergo, that they freely and in great multitudes offered themselves to the rage and fury of their enemies; embracing death as the greatest honour that could be done them, they strove (as Sulpitius Severus observes,[z] speaking of the ninth persecution) which should rush first upon those glorious conflicts; men in those days, (as he adds,) much more greedily seeking martyrdom in the cause of Christ, than in after-times they did for bishoprics and the preferments of the church. Lucian, who

[y] Nyssen. Orat. de vit. Greg. Thaumat. vol. ii. p. 1091. [z] Hist. Sacr. l. ii. p. 143.

certainly had very little love to Christians, yet gives this account of them: "the miserable wretches (says he,[a] οἱ κακοδαίμονες) do verily persuade them, i. e. those of their own party, that they shall surely be immortal, and live for ever; upon which account they despise death, and many of them voluntarily offer themselves to it." Indeed, they did ambitiously contend who should be first crowned with martyrdom, and that in such multitudes, that their enemies knew not what to do with them, their very persecutors grew weary of their bloody offices. Tiberianus, the president of Palestine, in his relation to the emperor Trajan, (recorded by Joannes Malela,[b] mentioned also by Suidas,) gives this account of his proceedings against them: "I am quite tired out in punishing and destroying the Galileans (called here by the name of Christians) according to your commands; and yet they cease not to offer themselves to be slain: nay, though I have laboured, both by fair means and threatenings, to make them conceal themselves from being known to be Christians, yet can I not stave them off from persecution." So little regard had they to sufferings; nay, so impatient were they till they were in the midst of flames. This made Arrius Antoninus, the proconsul of Asia,[c] when at first he severely persecuted the Christians, whereupon all the Christians in that city, like an army, voluntarily presented themselves before his tribunal, to be surprised with wonder, and causing only some few of them to be executed, he cried out to the rest, "O unhappy people, if you have a mind to die, have you not halters and precipices enough to end your lives with, but you must come hither for an execution?" So fast did they flock to the place of torment, faster than droves of beasts that are driven to the shambles. They even longed to be in the arms of suffering. Ignatius,[d] though then in his journey to Rome, in order to his execution, yet by the way as he went could not but vent his passionate desire of it: "O that I might come to those wild beasts that are prepared for me; I heartily wish, that I may presently meet with them; I would invite and encourage them speedily to devour me, and not be afraid to set upon me as they have been

[a] De mort. Peregr. vol. ii. p. 763.

[b] Apud Usser. Appen. Ignat. p. 9. ex Jo. Malel. Chron. l. xi. vid. Annot. in Ep. ad Philad. not. 82. in voc. Τροιανός.

[c] Tertul. ad Scap. c. 4.

[d] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 36.

to others; nay, should they refuse it, I would even force them to it: I am concerned for nothing either seen or unseen, more than to enjoy Jesus Christ: let fire and the cross, and the rage of wild beasts, the breaking of bones, distortion of members, bruising of the whole body, yea, all the punishments which the devil can invent, come upon me, so as I may but enjoy Christ." They even envied the martyrdom of others, and mourned that any went before, while they were left behind. When Laurentius the deacon espied Sixtus the bishop of Rome going to his martyrdom, he burst into tears, and passionately called out,[e] "Whither, O my father, art thou going without thy son? Whither so fast, O holy bishop, without thy deacon? Never didst thou use to offer spiritual sacrifice without thy minister to attend thee: what have I done that might displease thee? Hast thou found me degenerous and fearful? Make trial, at least, whether thou hast chosen a fit minister to wait upon thee." To this, and more to the same import, the good bishop replied, "Mistake not, my son; I do not leave thee, nor forsake thee; greater trials belong to thee: I, like a weak old man, receive only the first skirmishes of the battle; but thou, being youthful and valiant, hast a more glorious triumph over the enemy reserved for thee: cease to weep, thy turn will be presently; for within three days thou shalt follow me." So pious a contention was there between these good men, which of them should first suffer for the name of Christ. It is memorable what we find concerning Origen,[f] though then but a youth, that when a great persecution was raised at Alexandria, wherein many suffered, he was so eagerly enflamed with a desire of martyrdom, (especially after his father had been seized upon and cast into prison,) that he exposed himself to all dangers, and courted torments to come upon him; and had certainly suffered, if his mother, after all other entreaties and persuasions to no purpose, had not stolen away his clothes by night, and for mere shame forced him to stay at home.

To these I shall add but one example of the weaker sex. When Valens, the Arian emperor,[g] (who persecuted the orthodox with as much fury and bitterness as any of the heathen emperors,) came to Edessa, and found there great numbers of them daily meeting in their public assemblies, he severely checked the

[e] Ambr. offic. l. i. c. 42.

[f] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 2.

[g] Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 18.

governor, and commanded him by all means to root out and ruin them. The governor, though of another persuasion, yet, out of common compassion, gave them private notice of the emperor's commands, hoping they would forbear. But they, not at all terrified with the news, met the next morning in greater numbers, which the governor understanding, went to the place of their assembly: as he was going, a woman in a careless dress, leading a little child in her hand, rushed through the governor's guard, who commanding her to be brought before him, asked her why she made so much haste. "That I may the sooner come (said she) to the place where the people of the catholic church are met together." "Knowest thou not (said he) that the governor will be there to-day, and kill all whom he finds there?" "I know it well, (answered the woman,) and therefore make so much haste, lest I come too late, and be deprived of the crown of martyrdom." And being asked, why she carried her little son along with her, she answered, "that he also may partake of the common sufferings, and share in the same rewards." The governor, admiring the courage of the woman, turned back to the palace, and dissuaded the emperor from his cruel resolution, as what was neither honourable in itself, nor would conduce to his purposes and designs.

Thirdly: when they were condemned, though it was by a most unjust sentence, and to a most horrid death, they were so far from raging or repining, that instead of bitter and tart reflections, they gave thanks to their enemies for condemning them. "A Christian being condemned, (says Tertullian,[h]) thanks his judges; he takes it for a favour to die for so good a cause." "That they persecute us, (says Clemens of Alexandria,[i]) it is not because they find us to be wicked, but because they think we wrong the world by being Christians, and by teaching and persuading others to be so; as for us, they do us no harm, death does but the sooner send us to God; if therefore we be wise, we shall thank them that are the occasion of our more speedy passage thither." And elsewhere he tells us of St. Peter,[k] that seeing his wife going towards martyrdom, he exceedingly rejoiced that she was called to so great an honour, and that she was now returning home; encouraging and exhorting of her, and calling her by her name, bade her to be mindful of our Lord. "Such (says

[h] Apol. c. 46. [i] Strom. l. iv. c. 11. [k] Lib. vii. c. 11.

he) was the wedlock of that blessed couple, and their perfect disposition and agreement in those things that were dearest to them."

When Lucius, one of the primitive martyrs, was charged by Urbicius,[l] the Roman prefect, for being a Christian, only because he offered to speak in behalf of one that had very hard measure, he immediately confessed it, and being forthwith condemned, he heartily thanked his judge for it, that by this means he should be delivered from such unrighteous governors, and be sooner sent home to his heavenly Father. No joyfuller message could be told them, than that they must die for the sake of Christ: "though we contend with all your rage and cruelty, (as Tertullian[m] tells the president Scapula,) yet we freely offer ourselves, and rejoice more when we are condemned than when we are absolved and released by you." In despite of all the malice of their enemies, they accounted the instruments of their torment the ensigns of their honour and their happiness. When the heathens reproached them for dying such an infamous death as that of the cross, and, in derision, styled them *sarmenticii* and *semaxii*, for being burnt upon a little stake, to which they were bound with twigs; Tertullian[n] answers for them, "This is the habit of our victory, this is the embroidered garment of our conquest, this the triumphant chariot wherein we ride to heaven." When in prison, they looked upon their chains as their ornaments, as adding a beauty and lustre to them,[o] with which they were adorned against the time of their sufferings, as the bride is with fringes of gold and variegated ornaments against the day of her espousals. For this reason, Babylas the martyr[p] commanded that the chains which he had worn in prison should be buried with him, to shew that those things which seem most ignominious, are, for the sake of Christ, most splendid and honourable; imitating therein the great apostle, who was so far from being ashamed of, that he took pleasure in bonds, chains, reproaches, persecutions, distresses for Christ's sake, professing to glory in nothing but the cross of Christ.

Fourthly: whenever they were actually under the bitterest torments, they never discovered the least sign of a furious or impatient mind, but bore up with a quietness and composure

[l] Just. Martyr. Apol. ii. s. 2. [m] Ad Scap. c. 1. [n] Apol. c. 50.
[o] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 1. [p] Chrysost. lib. de S. Babyl. vol. i. p. 669.

which no sufferings could overcome. Cyprian,[q] exhorting the martyrs to courage and constancy, tells them this of those that had gone before them, that in the hottest conflict they never stirred, but maintained their ground with a free confession, an unshaken mind, a divine courage, destitute indeed of external weapons, but armed with the shield of faith: in torments, they stood stronger than their tormentors; their bruised and mangled limbs proved too hard for the instruments wherewith their flesh was racked and pulled from them; the blows, though never so oft repeated, could not conquer their impregnable faith, although they did not only slice and tear off the flesh, but rake into their very bowels, and let out blood enough to extinguish the flames of persecution, and to allay the heats of the everlasting fire. And in another place, speaking of the persecution under Decius at Rome, he tells us,[r] that the adversary did, with an horrible violence, break in upon the camp of Christ, but was repulsed with a strength as great as that wherewith he came upon them: that then he craftily attempted the more rude and weak, and subtly endeavoured to set upon them singly, hoping the easilier to circumvent them; but that he found them, like a well-compacted army, sober and vigilant, and prepared for battle; that they could die, but could not be overcome; yea, therefore unconquerable, because not afraid to die; that they did not resist those that rose up against them, being ready not to kill them that assaulted them, but to lay down their own lives, and to lose their blood, that they might make the more haste to get out of a cruel and malicious world. Indeed, so admirable was their patience and readiness to die, that their very enemies stood amazed at it. When Simeon,[s] the second bishop of Jerusalem, and of our Saviour's kindred, according to the flesh, had by the command of Atticus, the governor of Syria, been tortured with all the arts of cruelty for many days together, he bore it with such courage, that the proconsul himself, and all that were present, greatly wondered, that a man of an hundred and twenty years of age should be able to undergo so many miseries and torments. Of the martyrs that suffered together with St. Polycarp, the church of Smyrna gives this account:[t] "That all that were present were astonished when they saw them whipped till

[q] Epist. x. ad Martyr. p. 20.
[r] Epist. lx. ad Cornel. p. 141.
[s] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 32.
[t] Id. lib. iv. c. 15.

the cords made way to the inmost veins and arteries, till the bowels and the most hidden parts of the body appeared. They were raked with shells of fishes, laid all along upon sharp-pointed stakes driven into the ground, exercised with all sorts of torments, and at last thrown to be devoured of wild beasts; all which they bore with a mighty patience and constancy." Nay, as we find it in the first part of that epistle,[u] (contracted by Eusebius, but published at large by bishop Usher,) so great was their patience and magnanimity, that in all these sufferings not any of them gave a sigh or a groan. "The holy martyrs of Christ (says the epistle) evidently shewing us, that, during this sad hour of suffering, they were strangers to their own bodies, or rather that our Lord himself stood by them, and familiarly conversed with them, and that, being partakers of his grace, they made light of these temporal torments, and by one short hour delivered themselves from eternal miseries: the fire which their tormentors put to them seemed to them but cool and little, while they had it in their thoughts to avoid the everlasting and unextinguishable flames of another world; their eyes being fixed upon those rewards which are prepared for them 'that endure to the end, such as neither ear hath heard, nor eye hath seen, nor hath it entered into the heart of man,' but which were shewn to them by our Lord, as being now ready to go off from mortality, and to enter upon the state of angels."

Thus reasoned those forty martyrs in St. Basil,[x] that suffered at Sebastia in Armenia, in the reign of Licinius, when the governor, to contrive a new method of torment, had commanded them to stand naked all night, in cold frosty weather, (which in those more northerly countries is extreme sharp and bitter, it being then the depth of winter, and the north wind blowing very fierce,) in a pond of water; they first gave thanks to God that they put off their clothes and their sins together, and then comforted one another by balancing their present hardships with their future hopes: "Is the weather sharp? (said they) but paradise is comfortable and delightful. Is the frost cold and bitter? the rest that remains is sweet and pleasant. Let us but hold out a little, and Abraham's bosom will refresh us; we shall change this one night for an eternal age of happiness:

[u] Append. Ignatian. par. ii. p. 14. ed. Usser.

[x] Encom. in 40 Martyr. append. ad oper. Greg. Thaum. p. 85.

let our feet glow with very cold, so as they may for ever rejoice and triumph with angels; let our hands sink down, so as we may have liberty to lift them up to God. How many of our fellow-soldiers have lost their lives to keep faith to their temporal prince? And should we be unfaithful to the true King of heaven? How many have justly died for their crimes and villanies? And shall we refuse it in the cause of righteousness and religion? It is but the flesh that suffers, let us not spare it; since we must die, let us die that we may live." Thus generously did they bear up under this uncomfortable state; their ardent desires of heaven from within extinguishing all sense of cold and hardship from without. Nay, when a little before their commander had set upon them both with threatenings and promises, assuring them,[y] that if they would but deny Christ, they should make their own terms for riches and honour: they told him, that he laid his snares at a wrong door; that he could not give them what he endeavoured to take from them; nor could they close with his offers, without being infinitely losers by the bargain; that it was to no purpose to proffer a little of the world to them, who despised the whole of it; that all these visible advantages were nothing to what they had in hope and expectation; all the beauty and glory of heaven and earth not being comparable to that state of blessedness, which is the portion of the righteous; the one being short-lived and transitory, the other permanent and perpetual; that they were ambitious of no gift, but the crown of righteousness, nor sought after any other glory but what was heavenly; that they feared no torments but those of hell, and that fire that was truly terrible; as for those punishments they inflicted, they accounted them but as the blows of children; and the ill usage that their bodies met with, the longer it was endured, the more way it made for a brighter crown. Such was the temper, such the support of these Christian soldiers, these true champions of the Christian faith.

Indeed, this consideration was one of the greatest cordials that kept up their spirits under the saddest sufferings, that they were assured of a reward in heaven. "Amongst us (says Cyprian[z]) there flourishes strength of hope, firmness of faith, a mind erect amongst the ruins of a tottering age, an immoveable virtue, a

[y] Ibid. p. 81.

[z] Ad Demet. p. 192.

patience serene and cheerful, and a soul always secure and certain of its God. As for want or danger, what are these to Christians, to the servants of God, whom paradise invites, and the favour and plenty of the heavenly kingdom expects and waits for? They are always glad, and rejoice in God, and resolutely bear the evils and miseries of the world, while they look for the rewards and prosperities of another life." "The great philosophers, (as Eusebius observes,[a]) as much as they talked of immortality, yet by their carriage they shewed that they looked upon it but as a trifling and childish fable: whereas, (says he,) amongst us, even girls and children, the most unlearned and (measured by the eye) the meanest and most despicable persons, being assisted by the help and strength of our blessed Saviour, do rather by their actions than their words demonstrate and make good this doctrine of the immortality of the soul." This Julian confesses of the Christians,[b] though, according to his custom, he gives them bad words, calls them atheists and irreligious persons; that being acted by some evil spirits, they persuade themselves that death is by all means to be desired, and that they shall immediately fly to heaven, as soon as their souls are freed from the fetters of the body. Hence it was, that in those times Christians were wont to sing hymns and psalms at the funerals of the dead, to signify that they had attained their rest, the end of their labours, the retribution of their troubles, the reward and the crown of their conflicts and sufferings, as Chrysostom tells us:[c] part of which psalms, he elsewhere tells us, were "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;" and, "I will fear no evil, because thou art with me;" and again, "Thou art my refuge from the trouble that compasses me about." For the same reason, as being a sign of joy and cheerfulness, he there tells us, that they carried lights burning before the corpse. By all which, he tells us, they signified, that they carried forth Christians as champions to the grave, glorifying God, and giving thanks to him, that he had crowned the deceased person, that he had delivered him from his labours, that he had taken him to himself, and set him beyond the reach of storms and fears.

[a] Præpar. Evang. l. i. c. 4.

[b] Fragm. epist. oper. par. i. p. 528.

[c] Hom. li. de SS. Bern. et Prosd. vol. i. p. 563. Hom. iv. ad Hebr. p. 1785. Psal. cxvi. Psal. xxiv. 4. Ib. p. 1784.

But to return. There was scarce any one instance of religion wherein primitive Christianity did more openly approve itself to the world, and more evidently insult over paganism, than the generous courage and patience of its professors. By this they commended both the truth and excellency of their religion, and conquered their very enemies into an embracing of it. Hear how Lactantius pleads the argument,[d] and triumphs in the goodness of his cause: "By reason (says he) of our strange and wonderful courage and strength, new additions are made to us; for when the people see men torn in pieces with infinite variety of torments, and yet maintain a patience unconquerable, and able to tire out its tormentors, they begin to think (what the truth is) that the consent of so many, and the perseverance of dying persons, cannot be in vain; nor that patience itself, were it not from God, could hold out under such racks and tortures. Thieves, and men of a robust body, are not able to bear such tearing in pieces; they groan and cry out, and are overcome with pain, because not endued with a divine patience; but our very children and women (to say nothing of our men) do with silence conquer their tormentors, nor can the hottest fire force the least groan from them. Let the Romans go now and boast of their Mutius and Regulus; of the one, for delivering himself up to his enemy, to be put to death, because he was ashamed to live a prisoner; of the other, for burning his hand, at the command of the enemy, to save his life. Behold, with us the weaker sex, and the most tender age, can suffer all parts of their body to be torn and burnt; not out of necessity, because they might not escape if they would, but out of choice, because they believe in God. This is that true virtue which philosophers indeed vainly boast of, but never really possessed." This, and more to the same purpose, that eloquent apologist there urges to the great honour of his religion. By the force of such arguments Justin Martyr confesses,[e] that he was brought over from being a Platonic philosopher to be a Christian; for when he saw the Christians, whom he had so often heard accused and traduced, undauntedly going to die, and embracing the most terrible executions that were prepared for them, "I thought with myself (says he) that it was not possible such persons should wallow in vice and luxury; it being the interest of all wicked and voluptuous

[d] De Justit. l. v. c. 13. [e] Apol. ii. s. 12.

persons to shun death, to dissemble with princes and magistrates, and to do any thing to save their lives."

This certainly could not but be a huge satisfaction to all prudent and considerate men, that the Christians were guided by better principles than ordinary; and that they were fully assured, that theirs was the true religion, and that they taught nothing but what they firmly believed to be true. "For to maintain such patience and constancy, even unto death, (says Origen,[f] speaking of the apostles' propagating the doctrine of Christ,) is not the fashion of those who feign things of their own heads; but is a manifest argument to all candid and ingenuous readers, that they knew what they writ to be true, when they so cheerfully endured so many and such grievous things only for the sake of the Son of God, in whom they had believed. No dangers could affright them, no threatenings or torments could baffle them out of their profession." Therefore, when Celsus accused the Christians for a fearful sort of men, and such as loved their carcases well; Origen answers,[g] "No such matter; we can as cheerfully lay down our bodies to suffer for religion, as the hardiest philosopher of you all can put off his coat." And indeed the gospel did mightily prosper and triumph in the midst of these dreadful sufferings; men rationally concluding, that there must be something more than human in that doctrine, for which so many thus deeply ventured. So Tertullian tells Scapula,[h] in the conclusion of his book: "It is to no purpose to think this sect will fail, which you will see to be the more built up, the faster it is pulled down; for who is there that, beholding such eminent patience, cannot but have some scruples started in his mind, and be desirous to inquire into the cause of it, and when he once knows the truth, be himself moved to close with it and embrace it?" Therefore Julian the Apostate,[i] out of a cursed policy, refused many times openly to put Christians to death; partly because he envied them the honour of being martyrs; partly because he saw that they were like new-mown grass, the oftener it was cut down, the thicker it sprang up again.

I shall add no more concerning this subject, but the testimony which the very enemies of Christians gave them in this case. Julian the emperor, (whom we so lately mentioned, and who

[f] Adv. Cels. l. ii. s. 10.
[g] Lib. vii. s. 36.
[h] Cap. 1.
[i] Naz. in Jul. invect. i. p. 72.

fought against Christians with their own weapons, making use of those scriptures which he had studied while he was amongst them,) when the Christians complained to him of those oppressions and injuries which the governors of provinces laid upon them, made light of it, and dismissed them with this virulent sarcasm: "Your Christ (says he[k]) has given you a law, that when you suffer unjustly, you should bear it resolutely; and when oppressed and injured, should not answer again." And so certainly they did, undergoing all kinds of miseries, and death itself, with so unconcerned a mind, that elsewhere[l] he censures them, for this very reason, to be acted by the spirit of the devil. Hence Porphyry,[m] in a book that he wrote against the Christians, calls their religion τὸ βάρβαρον τόλμημα, "a piece of barbarous boldness:" barbarous, because so different from the way of worship amongst the Greeks, with whom every thing was barbarous that agreed not with their principles and institutions; boldness, because the Christians shewed such an undaunted courage in bearing miseries and torments, choosing to die a thousand times rather than to deny Christ, and sacrifice to the gods. For this reason the heathen in M. Felix[n] styles the Christians, men of an undone, furious, and desperate party, respecting their fearless and resolute carriage under sufferings: for so he explains himself presently after, "Is it not a strange folly, and an incredible boldness? They despise torments that are present, and yet fear those that are future and uncertain; and while they fear to die after death, in the mean time they are not afraid to die: so sillily do they flatter themselves, and cajole their fears by a deceitful hope of some unknown comforts that shall arise to them." This, Arrian, in his collection of Epictetus's dissertations,[o] confesses to be true of those whom (according to Julian's style) he calls the Galileans, that they underwent torments and death with a mighty courage, but which he makes to be the effect only of use, and a customary bearing sufferings. The emperor M. Antoninus confesses also the matter of fact,[p] that the Christians did thus readily and resolutely die; but ascribes it not to judgment and a rational consideration, but to mere stubbornness and obstinacy. And in an epistle that he wrote to the common council

[k] Niceph. Hist. Eccl. l. x. c. 24.
[l] Jul. fragm. epist. loc. supra laudat.
[m] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 19.
[n] Octav. c. 8.
[o] Lib. iv. c. 7.
[p] Τῶν εἰς ἑαυτὸν, l. xi. s. 3.

of Asia,[q] in favour of the Christians, whom his officers there did grievously vex and oppress, gives them this testimony, that they could have no greater kindness done them than to be called in question; and that they had much rather be put to death for their religion, than to have their lives spared to them: by which means they became conquerors, choosing rather to part with their lives, than to do what you impose upon them. "Let me advise you, (says he,) who are ready to despond with every earthquake that happens to you, to compare yourselves with them: they in all their dangers are securely confident in their God; while you at such a time neglect the gods, and have little or no regard, either to other rites, or to the worship of that immortal Deity, but banish the Christians that worship him, and persecute them unto death." So forcibly did the majesty of truth extort a confession from its greatest enemies.

[q] Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 13.

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY:

OR

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT CHRISTIANS

IN THE FIRST AGES OF THE GOSPEL.

PART III.

OF THEIR RELIGION AS RESPECTING OTHER MEN.

CHAPTER I.

OF THEIR JUSTICE AND HONESTY.

Christian religion admirably provides for moral righteousness. "Do as you would be done by," the great law of Christ. This rule highly prized by Severus the emperor. The first Christians accounted honesty and an upright carriage a main part of their religion. Their candour and simplicity in their words; abhorring lies and mental reservations, though it might save their lives. Their veracity such, as no need to be put to their oaths. Some few of the fathers against all swearing: allowed by the greatest part in weighty cases. That they took oaths proved from Athanasius, and their taking the *sacramentum militare*. The form of the oath out of Vegetius. The same expressly affirmed of the more ancient Christians by Tertullian. Why refusing to swear by the emperor's genius. Oaths wont to be taken at the holy sacrament upon the communion table, or the holy gospels. Some against all oaths, only to prevent a possibility of perjury. Bearing false witness, condemned and strictly punished by the ancient church. A famous instance of divine vengeance pursuing three false accusers. Christians careful in the conduct of their actions. Their integrity in matters of distributive justice: in commutative justice, avoiding all fraud and overreaching. St. Augustine's instance. Nicostratus forced to fly to avoid the punishment of cheating and sacrilege. The Christians unjustly accused of sacrilege by the heathens. The occasion of it. Pliny's testimony of the honesty of Christians. Theft and rapine severely condemned. Christians for doing all the good they could. Their care to right and relieve the oppressed. The Gentiles charged Christians with murder, and eating man's flesh. A brief representation of the several answers returned to it by the Christian apologists. The true rise of the charge found to spring from the barbarous and inhuman practices of the Gnostics mentioned by Irenæus and Epiphanius.

HAVING given some account of the religion of the ancient Christians, both as it respected their piety towards God, and their

sober and virtuous carriage towards themselves, we come, in the last place, to consider it in reference to their carriage towards others, which the apostle describes under the title of righteousness, under which he comprehends all that duty and respect wherein we stand obliged to others; whereof we shall consider these following instances: their justice and integrity in matters of commerce and traffic; their mutual love and charity to one another; their unity and peaceableness; and their submission and subjection to civil government.

I begin with the first, their just and upright carriage in their outward dealings. One great design of the Christian law, is to establish and ratify that great principle, which is one of the prime and fundamental laws of nature, "to hurt no man," and "to render to every one his due;" to teach us to carry ourselves as becomes us in our relations towards men. Next to our duty towards God, the gospel obliges us to be righteous to men, sincere and upright in all our dealings, "not going beyond, nor defrauding one another in any matter, to put away lying, and to speak truth to each other as fellow-members" of the same Christian brotherhood and society. It settles that golden rule as the fundamental law of all just and equitable commerce, "that all things whatsoever we would that men should do to us, we should even do so to them, this being the sum of the law and the prophets;" than which as no rule could have been more equitable in itself, so none could possibly have been contrived more short and plain, and more accommodate to the common cases of human life. Upon the account of these, and such like excellent precepts, Alexander Severus,[a] the Roman emperor, had so great an honour for our Saviour, that he was resolved to build a temple to him, and to receive him into the number of their gods; and though he was overruled in this by some, who, having consulted the oracle, told him, that if it were done, all men would become Christians, and the temples of the gods would be left naked and empty; yet, in his most private chapel,[b] he had the image of Christ amongst those of many noble heroes and deified persons, to whom he paid religious adoration every morning; and particularly for this precept, "that what we would not have done to ourselves, we should not do to others," (which his own historian[c] confesses he learned either from the

[a] Lamprid. in vit. Alex. Sev. c. 43. [b] Ibid. c. 29. [c] Ibid. c. 51.

Jews or Christians, but most certainly from the Christians, in whose mouths it so often was, and in whose gospel it was so plainly written;) he so highly valued it, that in all public punishments he caused it to be proclaimed by a common crier; nay, was so hugely fond of it, that he caused it to be written upon the walls of his palace, and upon all his public buildings, that, if possible, every room in his court, and every place in the city, might be a silent chancery and court of equity.

So vast a reverence had the very enemies of Christianity for the gospel upon this account, that it so admirably provides for the advance of civil righteousness and justice amongst men; which, however it has been slighted by some, even amongst Christians, under the notion of moral principles, yet without it all other religion is but vain, it being a strange piece of folly for any to dream of being godly without being honest, or to think of being a disciple of the first, while a man is an enemy to the second table. Sure I am, the Christians of old looked upon honesty and an upright carriage as a considerable part of their religion; and that to speak truth, to keep their words, to perform oaths and promises, to act sincerely in all their dealings, was as sacred and as dear to them as their lives and beings. Speech being the great instrument of mutual commerce and traffic, shall be the first instance of their integrity: they ever used the greatest candour and simplicity in expressing their mind to one another, not pretending what was false, nor concealing what was true; yea, yea, and nay, nay, was the usual measure of their transactions; a lie they abhorred as bad in all, as monstrous in a Christian, as directly opposite to that truth to which they had consigned and delivered up themselves in baptism, and therefore would not tell one, though it were to save their lives. When the heathens charged them with folly and madness that they would so resolutely suffer, when a parcel of fair words might make way for them to escape, telling them, it was but doing or saying as they were bid, and that they might secure their consciences by mental reservations, Tertullian[d] lets them know that they rejected the motion with the highest scorn, as the plain artifice and invention of the devil. "When we are most severely examined, (says Justin Martyr,[e]) we never deny ourselves; counting it impious in any thing to dissemble or deny

[d] Tert. Apol. c. 27.

[e] Apol. ii. s. 2.

the truth, as we know the contrary is acceptable unto God:" "and though we could, (as they told the emperors,[f]) when questioned, evade or deny it, yet we scorn to live upon any terms by which we must be forced to maintain our lives by lies and falsehood."

This honest and ingenuous simplicity they practised to that exactness and accuracy, that for a Christian to be put to his oath was accounted a disparagement to his fidelity and truth. So Clemens Alexandrinus tells us;[g] "he that approves himself, and is tried (says he) in this [i. e. the Christian] way of piety and religion, is far from being forward either to lie or swear: for an oath is a determinative assertion, with a calling God to witness for the truth of it: but how shall any one that is faithful so far render himself unfaithful, or unworthy of belief, as to need an oath, and not rather make the course of his life a testimony to him as firm and positive as an oath, and demonstrate the truth of his assertion by the constant and immutable tenor of his words and actions?" "It is enough, therefore, (as he presently after adds,) for every good man, either by way of affirmation or denial, to give this assurance, ἀληθῶς λέγω, 'I speak truly,' to satisfy any that apprehend not the certainty of what he says; for towards those that are without, he ought to have such a conversation as is most worthy of belief, so as no oath should be required of him; and towards himself and those of his party to preserve such an even and equitable temper of mind, as is a piece of voluntary justice." This and much more he discourses to the same purpose.

For this and some other reasons, but especially from some mistaken places of scripture, where it is said, "swear not at all," some of the ancient fathers held all taking of an oath unlawful; but besides that, those few that did, were not herein constant to themselves, the far greatest part were of another mind, and understood the prohibition either of swearing by creatures, (which was the case of the Jews, and which our Saviour and St. James principally aim at,) or of light, rash, and false swearing. For otherwise that the primitive Christians did not think it unlawful to take an oath in serious and necessary cases, is most evident. Athanasius,[h] speaking of his accusers, whom he desired might

[f] Just. Mart. Apol. i. s. 8.

[g] Stromat. l. vii. c. 8.

[h] Apol. ad Constant. Imp. s. 8.

be put to their oath, tells us, that the best way to attest the truth of what is spoken, is to call God to witness; "that this (says he) is the form of swearing, which we Christians are wont to use." And, indeed, though we had no other argument, it would be plain enough from hence, that they served in the wars, and frequently bore arms even under the heathen emperors, which it is evident they could not do, without first taking a military oath to be true to their general, and to die rather than to desert their station. And this Vegetius,[i] an heathen author, though living in the time of the younger Valentinian, expressly reports of them, that when their names were entered upon the muster-roll, they were wont to take an oath, the particular form whereof he there sets down, viz. "That they swore by God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the majesty of the emperor, which, next to God, is to be loved and honoured by mankind." This agrees very well with that account which Tertullian[k] had long before given of the Christians, when being accused by their enemies of high treason, amongst other reasons, because they refused to swear by their emperors; he answers, that though they would not swear by the emperor's genius, their genii, or tutelar deities, being nothing else but devils, yet they did swear by the emperor's safety, a thing more august and venerable than all the genii in the world: in the emperors they own God's institution and authority, and would therefore have that to be safe which he had appointed, and accordingly accounted it the matter of a lawful oath; but for the demons, or genii, (says he,) we use *adjurare*, "to adjure them," so as to cast them out of men; *non dejurare*, "not to swear by them," and thereby confer the honour of divinity upon them. For the same reason they denied to swear by the Fortune of the emperor, because, amongst the heathens, she was accounted a deity, and honoured with religious worship.

Thus we see, that they refused not to ensure and ratify their faith by the formality of an oath, to which, that they might add the greater reverence and solemnity, they were wont many times to take it at the receiving of the holy sacrament, as we find in the case of Novatus and his followers;[l] for, taking their hands wherein they held the sacramental elements within his own, he caused them to swear by the body and blood of our Lord Jesus

[i] De re militar. l. i. c. 5. [k] Apol. c. 32. [l] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 43.

Christ, that they would not desert him. But because this may be thought to have been only the artifice of an heretic, to bind his followers the faster to his party, St. Chrysostom[m] (though himself no good friend to taking oaths) sufficiently assures us, it was customary to come into the church, and to swear upon the communion table, taking the book of the holy gospels into their hands. The same appears from the case proposed to Gregory Nazianzen,[n] by Theodoret, bishop of Tyana, and by the instance of Evagrius, Nazianzen's archdeacon at Constantinople,[o] who had it revealed to him in a vision, that some persons lay in wait for him, and that therefore he must presently be gone; the person that revealed it assuring him, he would knock off those fetters that were upon him, if he would swear to him upon the holy gospels, that he would immediately depart, which was accordingly done. And as their caution was great in taking of an oath, so their care was no less in making of it good; they knew that in this solemn transaction they did in a more peculiar manner, calling God as a witness of what they said, and a revenger in case of falsehood and the violation of it; this made them greatly afraid of perjury, which they looked upon as a sin of a deeper and more than ordinary dye: and one reason, I conceive, why some of the ancients were against all swearing, (and Clemens Alexandrinus[p] and Lactantius[q] confirm me in it,) was, because they would not come so much as within the danger or possibility of perjury. Such as have sworn rashly, or in unlawful cases,[r] St. Basil earnestly exhorts to repentance, and that they would not persist in an obstinate defence of their impiety; and for such as are guilty of perjury, he appointed that they should be suspended and banished the communion for eleven years together.

The like severity, though not altogether so great, they used in case of bearing false witness: if any Christian falsely accused another before the church, (for in those days they allowed no appeals to heathen tribunals,) he was to be punished, i. e. suspended the communion, the only punishment the church in those days could inflict, according to the nature of the crime

[m] Ad Pop. Antioch. Hom. xv. s. 3.
[n] Epist. ccxix. p. 908.
[o] Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 30. et vid. Annot. Hen. Vales. p. 145.
[p] Strom. l. vii. c. 8.
[q] Lactant. Epitom. c. 6.
[r] Epist. Canon. ad Amphil. can. 29. 64.

which he charged upon the other, according to the decree of the Illiberine council,[s] if he made good his charge; yet if he had concealed it a considerable time before he revealed it, he was to be suspended for two years; the reason probably being, because by this delay the criminal person had had opportunity to infect others, by propagating his vicious example to them. But that they might not set the door open, and give encouragement to busy and malicious tempers, they ordained, that though the person should be really guilty of the crimes he was charged with, yet if the accuser did not sufficiently prove it *in conventu clericorum*, "before the ecclesiastical senate," he should be punished with a five years' suspension; and because then they had an honour and veneration for ministers above all other men, they ordained,[t] that whosoever should falsely accuse a clergyman, bishop, presbyter, or deacon, with any crime which he could not make good, should not be received into communion, even at the hour of death. The truth is, they were exceeding tender of any man's reputation, readier to add to it, than to detract from it, or to fasten any undue imputation upon him. St. Basil,[u] commending Gregory Thaumaturgus, has this of him amongst the rest: "Out of regard (says he) to the threatening of our Lord, he durst never call his brother fool: no anger, wrath, or bitterness proceeded out of his mouth: slandering he hated, as a quality greatly opposite to a state of salvation: pride and envy were strangers to that innocent and guiltless soul: he never approached the altar till first reconciled to his brother: all false and artificial speeches, and such as are cunningly contrived for the slander and detraction of others, he greatly abominated; well knowing, that every lie is the spawn and issue of the devil, and that God has threatened to destroy all those that speak lies." And so indeed he oftentimes does, even in the world, not respiting such persons to the tribunals of the other world; whereof we meet with this memorable example.[v] Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, a man of admirable piety and holiness of life, shined with so glorious a lustre in the place where he lived, that the brightness of his conversation offended the sore eyes of other men: three, more especially, not able to bear the eminent strictness of his life, and being them-

[s] Conc. Illiber. can. 74. ubi vid. not. Albasp.
[t] Ibid. can. 75.
[u] Ad Cleric. Eccles. Neocæsar. Ep. ccvii. s. 4.
[v] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 9.

selves guilty of very great enormities, thought to escape themselves by accusing him: whereupon, they laid a very heinous crime to his charge, and, to beget the greater credit with them that heard it, solemnly ratified it with their oaths: the first, imprecating upon himself that he might be burnt, if it were not true; the second, that his body might be consumed by some noisome and pestilent disease; the third, that he might lose his sight. The good man thought, notwithstanding all this, he stood right in the thoughts of all true Christians, who knew his life to be too clear and unblamable to be sullied with the breath of such vile fellows; yet not being able to bear it, withdrew himself to an eremite's life in the wilderness. But the restless eye of the divine vengeance quickly overtook these perjured wretches, and caught them in their own snares: the first, by a little spark that casually, and whereof no account could be given, happened in his house, was, in the night, himself, family, and house universally burnt to ashes; the second was from head to foot overrun and consumed by such a disease as he had wished upon himself; the third, that saw all this, and feared the righteous and inevitable vengeance of God upon himself, confessed the whole plot and combination, and testified his repentance with so deep a sorrow, that with the multitude of his tears he lost his sight.

We have seen how exact the Christians were about their words, that they should be harmless and inoffensive, and the true conveyances of their minds; nor were they less careful about the conduct of their actions, whether of distributive or commutative justice. For matters of distributive justice, so far as it concerns a fair hearing and impartial determining of trials and causes, rewarding the good, and punishing the bad, they had little opportunity to shew themselves; Christians in the first ages being seldom invested with an external authority and power, till the empire submitted to Christianity, and then we find them executing their places with the most unbiassed uprightness and integrity. St. Basil,[x] speaking of an excellent person (though he names him not) who was sent to be governor of Neocæsarea, where he was bishop, but presently undermined and ousted by the accusations of some that could not bear his free and impartial carriage, and his temper so extremely opposite

[x] Ad Saphron. Magist. Epist. xcvi.

to flattery, says this of him: "that he was a most rigid observer of justice, courteous and easy of access to them that were oppressed; but his presence severe and terrible to the injurious and transgressors of the law: he was the same to rich and poor, equally at leisure for both: of all men, he exceedingly abhorred taking bribes, never favouring any beyond the equity of his cause: and, which was above all, he was one that designed to reduce Christianity to its ancient dignity and perfection." The same Nazianzen[y] reports of his own father, and reckons it one of the excellent properties for which he accounted him a Christian, even before he embraced Christianity, that he so exactly observed justice himself, and so impartially administered it to others, that though he went through very great offices in the state, yet he made not one farthing's addition to his own revenue; though he saw some before his eyes, who, with Briarius's hands, laid hold upon the public treasures, and therewith filled their own coffers.

In matters of commutative justice, and ordinary transaction between man and man, they observed the rule, "to deal with others as they would be dealt with themselves:" they took no advantage of any man's ignorance or unskilfulness, so as to grasp that commodity at a far under-rate, of which they knew the seller did not understand the true price and value; and that if he did, he would not part with it at such a price. To this purpose, St. Augustine tells us,[z] he knew a man, (probably he means himself, though out of modesty he conceals it,) who having a book offered him to be sold by one that understood not the price of it, at a very small under-rate, took the book, but gave him the full price, according to its just rate and value, which was a great deal more than the seller asked for it. And the truth is, in such cases advantage cannot honestly be taken of men's weakness or mistake, because no man, if he understood the true worth and value of his commodity, can be supposed willing to part with it at a too under-rate. And if they were thus far from craftily overreaching, much more from secretly or openly invading of what was another's right and property: no cheating or cozenage, no acts of dishonesty and deceit, were allowed or practised amongst them; or, if any such were discovered, they were immediately protested against by the whole

[y] In laud. Patr. Orat. xix. p. 290.

[z] De Trinit. l. xiii. c. 3.

society of Christians. Cornelius bishop of Rome, giving Cyprian an account of Novatus the heretic and his companions,[a] tells him of one Nicostratus, that not only cheated his lady and patroness, whose estates and revenues he managed, but carried away a great part of the treasures of the church, (whereof he was chief deacon,) the portion and maintenance of poor widows and orphans, (a crime, says he, reserved for perpetual punishment, i. e. for the judgment of God in the other world, being too great for any in this,) whereupon he was forced to fly from Rome into Africa, to avoid the shame and prosecution of his rapine and sacrilege; though when he came there, they did not only refuse to admit him into communion, but openly exposed the wickedness of him and his confederates to the abhorrency of all men. By which may appear the falsity of that charge of sacrilege which the Gentiles brought against the Christians; to which though certainly it primarily respected their declared enmity against the idolatrous temples and worship of the heathens: yet Tertullian answers;[b] "You look upon us (says he) as sacrilegious persons, and yet never found any of us guilty of wrong or injury, of any rapine and violence, much less of sacrilege and impiety. No, they are your own party, that swear by and worship your gods, and yet rob their temples; that are no Christians, and yet are found to be sacrilegious." And afterwards he adds this further vindication of them: "As for us, (says he,[c]) we deny not any pledge that is left with us, we adulterate no man's marriage bed, we piously educate and train up orphans, and relieve the necessities of the indigent, and render no man evil for evil. If there be any that dissemble our religion, let them look to it, we disown them for being of our party; why should we be worse thought of for others' faults? or why should a Christian answer for any thing but what concerns his own religion, which no man in so long a time has proved to be cruel or incestuous? Nay, when we are burnt, and most severely dealt with, it is for the greatest innocency, honesty, justice, modesty, for our truth and faithfulness, and our piety to the living God." And that these were not a parcel of good words which the Christians spoke in their own behalf, will appear, if we consider the testimony which Pliny (who was far from

[a] Epist. l. p. 251. vid. Resp. Cyprian. Ep. sequent.

[b] Ad Scap. c. 2.

[c] Ibid. c. 4.

being partial to them) gives of them; for being commanded by the emperor Trajan to give him an account of the Christians, he tells him,[d] that after the strictest examination which he could make, even of those that had renounced Christianity, he found this to be the "greatest fault that they were guilty of, that they used harmlessly to meet to worship Christ, and at those meetings to bind themselves by a sacrament [or an oath] that they would not do any wickedness, that they might be firmlier obliged not to commit theft, robberies, adulteries, not to falsify their words, or to deny any thing wherewith they were entrusted, when it was required of them."

Gregory, bishop of Neocæsarea, in a canonical epistle,[e] which he wrote to rectify several disorders and irregularities which had happened amongst the Christians of those parts, by reason of the inroads and devastations which the Goths and other barbarous nations had made amongst them, does amongst other things especially take notice, how uncomely in itself, how unsuitable to Christians, it is to covet and to grasp what is another man's; how inhuman to spoil the oppressed, and to enrich ourselves by the blood and ruins of our miserable brethren. And whereas some might be apt to plead, they did not steal, but only take up what they found; he tells them this excuse would not serve the turn, that whatever they had found of their neighbours', nay, though it were their enemies', they were bound to restore it, much more to their brethren, who were fellow-sufferers with them in the same condition. Others thought it warrant enough to keep what they found, though belonging to others, having been such deep losers themselves. But this (he tells them) is to justify one wickedness with another; and because the Goths had been enemies to them, they would become Goths and barbarians unto others. Nor did they only keep themselves from doing injuries to other; they were ready to do them all the right, all the kindness that lay in their power, especially to vindicate the poor and helpless from the power and violence of those that were too mighty for them. Therefore, when the fathers of the synod of Sardis[f] took notice, that some bishops used to go to court upon by-errands, and private designs of their own, they ordained, that no bishop should go to court, unless either immediately summoned by the emperor's letters, or that

[d] Lib. x. ep. 97. [e] Can. 2, 3, 4, 5. [f] Can. 7, 8.

their assistance was required to help the oppressed, to right widows and orphans, and to rescue them from the unjust grasps of potent and merciless oppressors; and that in these cases they should be ready (either by themselves, or some deputed by them) to present their petitions, to plead their cause, and to lend them all the assistance they were able to afford.

I should not in this place have taken any notice how far the ancient Christians were from murder, and offering violence to any man's life, but that it was a common charge brought against them by the Gentiles, that they used to kill and devour an infant at their Christian meetings, especially when any was first to be initiated into their assemblies: the story is thus dressed up by the acute heathen in M. Felix:[g] "An infant being covered all over with meal, (the better to deceive the unwary,) is set before him that is to be initiated and taken in; he, ignorant of what it really is, is appointed to cut it up, which he effectually does by many secret and mortal wounds; whereupon they greedily lick up the blood, and ravenously tear off and snatch away the several parts of it; and with this sacrifice their confederacy and combination is made, and by the conscience of so great a villany they are mutually obliged to silence: such sacred rites as these being more horrid and barbarous than the highest sacrileges in the world." To this monstrous and horrid charge, the Christians returned these answers:[h] that they appealed to the common faith of mankind, whether they could really believe them to be guilty of these things, so abhorrent to all the principles of human nature, and to the Christians' known principles and practices in all other things: that they should measure the Christians by themselves, and if they themselves could not be guilty of such things, they should not suspect it by the Christians, who were endued with the same principles of humanity with other men: that they were so far from being friends to murder or manslaughter, that they held it unlawful to be present at the gladiatory sports,[i] where men's lives were so wantonly sacrificed to the pleasure and curiosity of the people: that they accounted it murder for any woman by evil arts to procure abortion,[k] to stifle the embryo, to kill a child, in a manner,

[g] Octav. c. 9. Vid. Tert. Apol. c. 9. [h] Tert. Apol. c. 9. Min. Fel. Octav. c. 31.
[i] Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 35. Min. Fel. ibid.
[k] Athenag. ibid. Min. Fel. ibid. Tert. Apol. c. 9.

before it be alive, it being much at one to hinder life as to take it away, to kill a man, or destroy what would be one, seeing he truly destroys the fruit that kills it in the seed: that it was not likely they should delight in man's blood,[l] who never tasted any blood at all, abstaining from things strangled, and from blood. And that the very heathens themselves confessed this, when, amongst the several arts they used to discover whether men were Christians, they used to offer them bladders full of blood, knowing that they held it unlawful to taste any; and therefore it was mightily improbable they should thirst after human blood, who abhorred even the blood of beasts: that they heartily believed the resurrection of the dead;[m] and therefore would not make themselves the sepulchres of those bodies which were to rise again, and feed upon them as they did upon other bodies which were to have no resurrection: that the truth was, if this charge was true of any, it was true only of the Gentiles themselves, amongst whom these things were daily allowed and practised; that Saturn (one of their chief deities) did not only expose, but eat his own children; to him infants in Africa were offered in sacrifice by their own parents, a custom that openly continued till the proconsulship of Tiberius, which though he abolished, yet it continued still in corners in Tertullian's days. To his son Jupiter they offered human sacrifices,[n] even in Rome itself, and that even to the time of M. Felix,[o] as he himself testifies; which is no more than what Porphyry[p] himself (after he had reckoned up in how many parts of the world human sacrifices were in use) confesses was done at Rome, in the feast of Jupiter Latialis, even in his time. Many other instances of such barbarous practices are there produced by those two apologists, which they urge with great advantage upon their adversaries, whom they challenged to make any such thing good against them.

And no sooner did discipline begin to be regularly settled, but their principles herein were every where confirmed by the canons of the church, either private or public.[q] The woman that industriously made herself miscarry, was adjudged to be guilty of murder, and condemned to the same punishment, a ten years'

[l] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 31. Tert. ibid.
[m] Athenag. leg. pro Christ. s. 56.
[n] Id. ibid.
[o] Octav. c. 31.
[p] De Abst. l. ii. s. 56.
[q] Basil. ep. Can. Con. 2.

penance;[r] which was adjudged to be the case of any that brought forth upon the way, and exposed her infant. By the law of the state, made by the emperor Valentinian,[s] whosoever, whether man or woman, killed an infant, was to be subject to the same capital punishment as if he had killed an adult person, which may very well be understood even of infants killed in the womb, the punishment whereof was formerly, for the most part, no more than banishment. He that was guilty of wilful murder was, by St. Basil's rule,[t] to undergo a twenty years' penance before he was admitted to the sacrament; though, by several passages in Tertullian, it appears that homicides in his time were more severely treated by the church; for they were not only bound to a perpetual penance, but were not absolved at death. But this severity shortly after began to relax, and such persons, though obliged to acts of repentance all their life, yet at death were absolved, and admitted to communion, as is expressly provided by the decree of the Ancyran council.[u]

Thus clear did the Christians all along stand from any just suspicion of that gross piece of inhumanity which their enemies so confidently charged upon them. As for the rise and occasion of this malicious charge, it was doubtless of the same growth with that of their incestuous mixtures, (spoken of before,) both springing from the abominable practices of some filthy heretics, who sheltered themselves under the name of Christians; Epiphanius particularly reporting of the Gnostics what the heathens generally charged upon the Christians; for he tells us of them,[x] that at their meetings they were wont to take an infant begotten in their promiscuous mixtures, and beating in a mortar, to season it with honey and pepper, and some other spices and perfumes, to make it palatable, and then, like swine or dogs, to devour it; and after, to conclude all with prayer: and this they accounted their perfect passover. I am not ignorant that a learned man will by no means believe, that any of the ancient heretics did ever arrive to so much barbarousness and inhumanity, as to be guilty of such things, and conceives them to have been feigned merely out of hatred to those pestilent heretics; but there is little

[r] Basil. ep. Can. Con. 33.

[s] Cod. Theodos. lib. ix. tit. xiv. l. 1.

[t] Can. 56.

[u] Can. 22.

[x] Hæres. xxvi. c. 5. Vid. de Phryg. seu Quintilian. Hæres. xlviii. c. 14. de Montanist. Zon. et Balsam. in Can. 7. Conc. Const. Desid. Herald. Not. ad Min. Fel. p. 76. ed. 1668.

reason to suspect the truth of it, Epiphanius assuring us,[y] that he had the account that he gives from the mouths of the Gnostics themselves; and that many of the women who were deceived into those abominable errors, did not only discover these things to him, but that he himself in his younger years, while he was in Egypt, had been assaulted by them, and by all the arts of flattery and persuasion of wantonness and immodesty, had been set upon to join himself to them. And, certainly, it is not imaginable, that a person so venerable for learning and piety, as Epiphanius was, should impose upon us by feigning so gross and notorious a falsehood. Besides, whoever reads Irenæus, in whose time these heresies were most rife and predominant, and considers the account that he gives of them, which he mainly received from the persons of their own party, after they were returned back to the church, will see little reason either to think any wickedness too great for them to boggle at, or to doubt of the truth of what he reports concerning them.

CHAPTER II.

OF THEIR ADMIRABLE LOVE AND CHARITY.

The excellent temper of the Christian religion. The gospel principally enjoins kindness and charity. The primitive Christians eminently of this spirit. They accounted all brethren; but Christians more especially. Their mutual love noted and recorded by their enemies. Their mighty zeal and charity for the souls of men, to recover them from vice and error to truth and virtue. This the matter of their daily prayer, and most serious endeavours, even towards their greatest enemies. Pamphilus's charity in bestowing bibles freely upon the poor. Preachers maintained for converting the Gentile Phœnicians to Christianity. The famous story of St. John's hazarding himself for the regaining a young man debauched by bad companions. Monica's care and solicitude about St. Augustine. Some that have sold themselves for slaves, that they might convert their heathen or heretical masters. Christians not shy of communicating the knowledge of their religion. Their charity, as it respected the necessities of the outward life. This noted in several instances of charity. Their liberal providing for the poor. The bounty of particular persons. Divers instances of it. The immense charity of Epiphanius. Exemplary vengeance upon some that abused it. The poor accounted the treasure and ornaments of the church: represented in the case of Laurentius the deacon, and a story related by Palladius. Their visiting and assisting the sick in their own persons: eminently noted in the empress Placilla, and the lady Fabiola. The Christians' care of their brethren in a great plague at Alexandria. Persons appointed on purpose to cure and attend the sick. The *parabolani*, who.

[y] Hæres. xxvi. c. 17.

Their office and number. Redemption of captives. Great sums contributed by Cyprian and his people for it. Church-plate sold to redeem Christians, nay, captived enemies. Christians' embondaging themselves to redeem others. The strange charity of Paulinus bishop of Nola, making himself a slave to ransom a poor widow's son. Their care about the bodies of the dead. Decent burial very fit and desirable. A piece of piety remarkable in the Christians of those times. Their abstaining from the common custom of burning the dead as barbarous. The great cost they laid out upon their funerals in embalming, intombing, &c. The *copiotæ*, who. What their office and order. The *decani*, or deans in the church of Constantinople: their number and duty. Their providing fit places of sepulture. Their *cemeteria*, or burying places in the fields. Burying in cities and churches, when brought in, and to whom first granted. Their *cemeteria* under ground. What kind of places they were. The great number, and vast capacities of them. A particular account of one out of Baronius, discovered in his time. How the Christians were enabled to all these acts of charity. At first all in common: after, by usual contributions. The standing stock or treasury of the church. This charity of Christians largely attested by Julian and Lucian. Their love and charity universal. Doing good to enemies, an excellency proper to Christians. This manifested in several remarkable instances. Plainly acknowledged by Julian himself. The whole summed up in an elegant discourse of Lactantius, concerning mercy and charity.

That the Christian religion was immediately designed to improve and perfect the principles of human nature, appears as from many other instances of it, so especially from this, that it so strictly enjoins, cherishes, and promotes that natural kindness and compassion, which is one of the prime and essential inclinations of mankind; wherever the gospel is cordially complied with, it begets such a sweet and gracious temper of mind, as makes us humble, affable, courteous, and charitable, ready and disposed to every good work, prompt to all offices of humanity and kindness; it files off the ruggedness of men's natures, banishes a rude, churlish, and pharisaical temper, and infuses a more calm and treatable disposition. It commands us to "live and love as brethren, to love without hypocrisy, to have fervent charity amongst ourselves, and to be kindly affectionated one towards another." It lays the sum of our duty towards others in this, "to love our neighbour as ourselves." This our Saviour seems to own as his proper and peculiar law, and has ratified it with his own solemn sanction: "a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another:" and then makes this the great visible badge of all those who are truly Christians; "by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another."

And so indeed it was in those first and best ages of religion; for no sooner did the gospel fly abroad into the world, but the love and charity of Christians became notorious, even to a proverb, the heathens taking notice of the Christians of those times with this particular remark,[z] "See how these Christians love one another!" They were then united in the most happy fraternity, (a word much used by the Christians in those days, and objected against them by the heathens,) they lived as brethren, and accounted themselves such, not only as being sprung from one common parent,[a] (for in this respect that they had nature for their common mother, they acknowledged the very heathens to be brethren, though otherwise little deserving the name of men,) but upon much higher accounts, viz. that they had one and the same God for their Father, drank all of the same spirit of holiness, were brought out of the same womb of darkness and ignorance into the same light of truth, that they were partakers of the same faith, and coheirs of the same hope. This Lucian[b] himself confesses of them, and that it was one of the great principles that their Master instilled into them, that they should all become brethren, after once they had thrown off the religion of the Gentiles, and had embraced the worship of their great crucified Master, and given up themselves to live according to his laws. The truth is, so ready, entire, and constant was their kindness and familiarity, that the heathens accused them for having privy marks upon their bodies,[c] whereby they fell in love with each other at first sight. Indeed, they never met but they embraced one another with all the demonstrations of a hearty and sincere affection, saluting each other with an holy kiss, not only in their own houses, but at their religious assemblies, as a badge and bond of that Christian fellowship and communion that was maintained amongst them.

But the love and kindness of those Christians of old did not lie only in a smooth complimental carriage, or in a parcel of good words, "depart in peace, be you warmed or filled," but in the real exercises of charity and mercy. Now because the two great objects of charity are the good of men's souls, and their outward and bodily welfare and happiness, we shall find, that the primitive Christians were highly eminent and exemplary for

[z] Tert. Apol. c. 39.
[a] Id. ibid. Min. Fel. Octav. c. 31.
[b] De mort. Peregrin. vol. ii. p. 764.
[c] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 9. et 31.

both these. The soul being of a much higher and nobler nature, and consequently infinitely more precious and valuable than the body, they were accordingly infinitely careful and solicitous to save men's souls, to recover them out of the snare of the devil, and the paths of ruin, by making them Christians, and bringing them over to the knowledge of the truth; for this they prayed daily and earnestly. "We Christians (says Cyprian[d] to the proconsul) serve the one and true God that made heaven and earth, and pray to him night and day, not only for ourselves, but for all men, and for the safety of the emperors themselves." From this no injuries nor unkindnesses could discourage them. Justin Martyr[e] tells the Jews, that they prayed for them, and all others that were unjustly their enemies, that repenting of their wickednesses, and ceasing to blaspheme Christ Jesus, who, by the greatness of his works, the uncontrollableness of the miracles performed in his name, the excellency of his doctrines, and the clearness of the prophecies fulfilled in him, appeared to be altogether innocent and unblamable, and that rather believing in him, they might, together with Christians, be saved by him at his second glorious coming, and not be condemned by him to everlasting flames. "We pray for you, (says he,[f]) that Christ would have mercy upon you; for he has taught us to pray for our enemies, to love them, and be merciful to them." And afterwards, when he had reckoned up all those wicked and malicious artifices which the Jews had used both against Christ and Christians, "yet, notwithstanding all this, (says he,[g]) we are so far from hating either you, or those who at your suggestion believe these things of us, that we pray that all of you may repent, and obtain mercy from God, the gracious and compassionate Parent of the world." The Gnostics were the greatest scandal that ever was to Christianity, and the occasion of many of those persecutions, and most of those horrible calumnies which the heathens brought upon the Christians, and yet see how Irenæus treats them; "We pray for them (says he[h]) and beg of them not to continue in the pit which they have digged to themselves, but to depart from their sottish and idle vanities, to turn to the church of God, that Christ may be formed in them, and that they may know the only true God, the Creator of the world. This we beg of them, loving them to better purpose

[d] Passio Cyp. vit. ejus annex. p. 11.
[e] Dial. cum Tryph. s. 35.
[f] Ibid. s. 96.
[g] Ibid. s. 133.
[h] Adv. Hær. l. iii. c. 25. s. 7.

than they think they love themselves: for our love is true and wholesome, (if they will receive it,) like a sharp plaster, indeed, but it will eat away the proud flesh, take down the swelling and vanity of their minds; for which cause we will not cease by all means to apply it to them." The same Origen tells Celsus,[i] that though both Jews and Gentiles turned their backs upon the doctrine of Christ, and charged them for being impostors and deceivers, yet they would not give over thus honestly to deceive men, to make them of loose persons to become sober and temperate, or to bring them on towards it; of dishonest to make them righteous, of unwise to make them prudent, at least to bring them into the way to these things; of fearful and timorous to render them hearty and courageous, especially as oft as they are to contend for their religion and piety towards God. How earnestly and passionately does Cyprian[k] beg of the proconsul Demetrian and the Gentiles to provide for their happiness and safety, to accept of the counsels and assistance which the Christians offered, who loved them not the worse for all the torments and sufferings they laid upon them; that they returned kindness for hatred, and, by the miseries they endured, shewed to them the way to heaven; that now was the time to make their peace with God, and to secure salvation; that there was no place for repentance on the other side the grave, the stations of the other world being fixed and unchangeable; that therefore they should believe, and live so that they might eternally rejoice with them, whom they did now so afflict and persecute.

In pursuance of this design, they spared neither pains nor cost that they might instruct men in the way to heaven. It is said of Pamphilus the martyr,[l] that, amongst other instances of his charity, he used freely and readily to bestow bibles upon all that were willing to read; for which purpose he had always great numbers of those holy volumes by him, that, as occasion served, he might distribute and bestow them. By these means mercifully furnishing those with these divine treasures, whose purses could not otherwise reach to the price of the scriptures, far dearer in those days than they are since printing came into the world. We find St. Chrysostom so zealous for converting the Gentiles to Christianity,[m] that for this very end he maintained many

[i] Cont. Cels. l. ii. s. 79.
[k] Ad Demet. p. 194.
[l] Hier. adv. Rufin. vol. iv. par. ii. p. 279. et Euseb.
[m] Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 29.

presbyters and monks in Phœnicia, partly at his own charge, and partly by the assistance of pious and well-disposed persons, whose only work it was to catechise and instruct the heathens in the principles of the Christian faith; and that the business might succeed the more effectually, he procured a law from the emperor Arcadius, (yet extant in the Theodosian Code,[n]) directed to Eutychian, prefect of the East, that the pagan temples should be orderly taken down, that so, they being destroyed, the whole matter of the Gentile superstition might be abolished. Upon the executing of which law, great multitudes were raised by the country people, many of the monks wounded, and some slain, and the rest wholly disheartened to proceed in the business, (these doubtless being those very monks against whom Libanius[o] so severely declaims, for so mercilessly destroying the pagan temples.) Whereupon Chrysostom[p] (who was then in banishment) writes to them to bear up with a Christian and invincible patience, encourages them resolutely to go on in so good a work; tells them, that God would not be wanting to stand by them, and to reward them in this and the other life, and promises them (though his incomes at this time were very small) that their former pensions should be paid them, and all things necessary provided for them. And, indeed, with how much care and solicitude the good man's mind was filled about this business, he sufficiently intimates in a letter written to another person whom he had employed about this affair.[q] Nor did they in those times regard ease or safety any more than they did cost and charges in this matter; exposing themselves to any dangers, that they might do good to the souls of men.

I might easily shew, that this consideration had a great influence upon the sufferings of the primitive martyrs; willingly running any hazards, cheerfully enduring any miseries, that they might gain others to the faith, and prevent their eternal ruin. But that famous story of St. John the Apostle shall serve instead of many, the sum of which is this:[r] coming to a place near Ephesus, in his visitation of the churches, he espied a youth of a comely shape and pregnant parts, and taking hold of him, delivered him to the bishop of the place with this charge, (which he repeated once and again:) "I commend this person to thee,

[n] Lib. xvi. tit. x. de Pag. sacrif. et temp. l. 17.
[o] Orat. de Templ. p. 10.
[p] Epist. cxxiii.
[q] Ad Rufin. Ep. cxxvi.
[r] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 23.

to be looked to with all care and diligence, and that in the presence of Christ and the church." The bishop undertook the charge, received the young man into his house, instructed him, and at last baptized him: which being done, he thought he might remit a little of the strictness of his care; but the young man, making an ill use of his liberty, fell into bad company, by whose arts and snares he was seduced into ways of riot and wickedness; till despairing of all hope of pardon from God, he let loose the reins to all manner of exorbitancy, and agreeing with his confederates, they combined themselves into a society of highwaymen, and made him their captain, who quickly became as far beyond the rest in fierceness and cruelty, as he was in power and authority. St. John, upon occasion, returning some while after to the same place, after he had despatched his other business, required from the bishop the pledge he had left with him: who wondering, and not knowing what he meant; "I mean (said St. John) the young man: it is the soul of my brother that I require." The old man, with a dejected look and tears in his eyes, answered, "He is dead:" and being demanded by what kind of death; answered, "He is dead to God; for, alas, he has become a villain; and instead of the church, is fled with his companions to the mountains to be a thief and a robber." The apostle, rending his clothes, and bewailing that he had so ill betrusted his brother's soul, immediately called for a horse and a guide, and made haste to the mountains, where being taken by those that stood sentinel, he begged to be brought before their captain, who stood ready armed some way off; but as soon as he perceived it was St. John that was coming towards him, he began to be ashamed, and to run as fast as he could. The apostle, not regarding his own age and weakness, followed after with all his might; and when his legs could not overtake him, he sent these passionate exclamations after him: "Why, O my son, dost thou fly from thy aged and unarmed father? Take pity of me, and fear not, there is yet hope of salvation for thee. I will undertake with Christ for thee; if need be, I will freely undergo death for thee, as our Lord did for us, and lay down my own life to ransom thine; only stay and believe me, for I am sent by Christ." With that he stayed, and with a dejected look, throwing away his arms, he trembled, and dissolved into tears; he embraced the aged apostle with all possible expressions of sorrow and lamentation,

as if again baptized with his own tears. St. John assured him he had obtained his pardon of Christ; and having fasted and prayed with him and for him, and with all the arts of consolation refreshed his shattered and disconsolate mind, brought him into, and restored him to the church.

This story, though somewhat long, I was the willinger to produce, both because so remarkable in itself, and so great a testimony of that mighty tenderness and compassion which they had for the souls of men; for whose sake they thought they could never do, never venture far enough. St. Augustine[s] tells us, what infinite pains his mother Monica took about the conversion of her husband Patricius; how unweariedly she sought to endear herself to him, by all the arts of a meek, prudent, and sober carriage; how submissively she complied with his rigorous and untoward humours; how diligently she watched the aptest times of insinuation, never leaving, till at last she gained him over to the faith. Nor was her care and solicitude less for her son Augustine, who being hurried away with the lewdnesses of youth, and entangled with the impieties of the Manichean heresy, was the hourly subject of her prayers and tears. She plied him with daily counsels and entreaties, implored the help and assistances of good men, and importuned heaven for the success of all; not being able to gain any quiet to her mind, till St. Ambrose (with whom she had oft advised about it) sent her away with this assurance, "that it was not possible that a child of so many tears should perish:" no sooner was his conversion wrought, but her spirit was at ease, and she now desired no more. Himself tells us,[t] that discoursing with her alone, some few days before her death, concerning the state of the blessed, and the joys of heaven, she at last broke off with this farewell: "For my part, son, I have now no further hopes or pleasures in this world; there was but one thing for which I desired to live, that I might see thee a catholic Christian before I died; this my good God has abundantly blessed me with, having let me see thee despising the felicities of this life, and entered into his family and service; so that what do I make any longer here?" Nay, so great a zeal had they for the good of souls in those days, that many did not stick to engage themselves in temporal slavery, for no other end but to deliver others from spiritual

[s] Confess. l. ix. c. 2. [t] Ibid. c. 10.

bondage. Thus Serapian, called Sindonites, (because he never wore more than one poor linen garment,) one of the primitive ascetics,[u] sold himself to a Gentile player, that served the theatre, with whom he lived and underwent the meanest offices, till he had converted him, his wife, and whole family to Christianity, who upon their baptism restored him to his liberty; whereupon he freely returned them back the money which he had received as the price of his servitude, which by mutual consent was given to the poor. Coming afterwards to Lacedæmon, and hearing that a principal person of the city, a very good man otherwise, was infected with the Manichean heresy, one of the first things he did, was to insinuate himself into his family, selling himself to be his slave; in which condition he remained for two years together, till he had brought his master and his whole family off from that pernicious heresy, and restored them to the church; who did not only bless God for it, but treated him not as a servant, but with that kindness and reverence that is due to a brother and a father. This was the good spirit and genius of those days; they entirely studied and designed the happiness of men, were willing and desirous freely to impart the treasuries of the gospel, and wished that in that respect all mankind were as rich and happy as themselves. So far were they from that malicious imputation which Celsus fastened upon them, that if all men would become Christians they would not admit it: to which Origen flatly returns the lie,[x] and tells him, the falseness of it might appear from this, that Christians (as much as in them lay) were not backward to propagate their doctrine through the whole world; and that some of them had peculiarly undertaken to go up and down, not only in cities, but in towns and villages, to bring over others to the true religion. And that they did not this out of any designs of gain or interest to themselves was plain, because they often refused to receive necessary accommodations from others; or if they did, they were such only as were barely and absolutely necessary for the present turn, whenas far greater liberalities have been offered to them. Nay, some of the ancient canons expressly require,[y] that no man, who has either heretics or infidels in his family, shall be admitted to the order either of bishop, presbyter, or deacon, who has not first converted those persons to the true Christian faith.

[u] Pallad. Hist. Laus. c. 83. in vit. Serap. p. 182.

[x] Orig. contr. Cels. l. iii. s. 9.

[y] Conc. Carth. iii. Can. 18.

Having seen what kindness and charity they expressed to men's souls, we come next to that which respected their bodies, and the necessities of the outward life: this they shewed in several instances; we shall consider some of the most material. In the first place, they took special care to provide for the poor, and such as were unable to help themselves: this Cyprian,[z] in his retirement, gave especially in charge to the presbyters and deacons of his church, that by all means they should mind the poor, and furnish them with whatever was necessary for them. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth,[a] testifies of the church of Rome, that they did not only eminently provide for their own poor, but with great liberality administer to the necessities of other churches, plentifully relieving whatever indigent brethren came to them, or wherever they were, though at the greatest distance from them. And of the church of Antioch Chrysostom tells us,[b] that in his time, though the revenues of it were but small, yet besides its clergy, besides strangers, lepers, and such as were in bonds, it daily maintained above three thousand widows and maids. Indeed, the bounty of those times was almost incredible. St. Cyprian,[c] upon his turning Christian, sold his estate to relieve the wants of others, and could not be restrained from it either by the persuasions of others, or the considerations of what he might be reduced to himself. After his entrance upon the ministry, his doors were open to all that came; from whom no widow ever returned empty: to any that were blind he would be their guide to direct them; them that were lame, he was ready to lend his assistance to support them; none were oppressed by might, but he was ready to defend them. Cæsarius, St. Basil's brother, made only this short will when he died,[d] "I will that all my estate be given to the poor." Nazianzen reports of his father,[e] that he was so kind to the poor, that he did not only bestow the surplusage of his estate upon them, but even part of what was reserved for necessary uses: of his mother,[f] that one ocean of wealth would not have filled her unsatisfied desire of doing good, and that he had often heard her say, that if it were lawful she could willingly have sold herself and children, to have expended the price upon the uses of the poor:

[z] Epist. xiv. p. 32.
[a] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 23.
[b] Hom. lxvii. in Matt. s. 3.
[c] Vit. ejus per Pont. Diac. p. 2.
[d] Basil. ad Sophron. Epist. xxxii. s. 1.
[e] Orat. xix. p. 298.
[f] Ibid. p. 299.

and of his sister Gorgonia, that she was immensely liberal; Job-like, her gate was open to every stranger; she was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a mother to orphans; her estate was as common to the poor, and as much at their need, as every one's is to himself, dispersing and scattering abroad, and, according to the counsel of our Saviour, "laying up her treasure in heaven."

They gave not only according to, but beyond their ability; trusting to the goodness and fidelity of heaven to supply what wanted, which many times made the return with overplus by ways uncommon and extraordinary. Sozomen relates of Epiphanius,[g] bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, that having spent all his own estate in pious and charitable uses, in relieving the needy, and such as were by shipwreck and the mercy of the sea cast upon the coast, he freely dispensed and distributed the goods and treasures of his church, (which by the bounty of charitable persons from all parts, who thought they could not better lodge their estates than in the hands of so good a man, was very rich and wealthy,) and that with so liberal a hand, that the steward, or guardian of the church, finding its stock begin to grow very low, with some resentment told him of it, charging him as too profuse and open-handed: all which notwithstanding, he remitted nothing of his accustomed bounty to the poor. At length, all being spent, a stranger on a sudden comes into the steward's lodgings, and delivers into his hands a great purse of gold, without any discovery either who it was that brought it, or who it was that sent it. And, indeed, so vast and universal was the charity of this good man, that it sometimes made him liable to be imposed upon by crafty and designing persons, whereof the historian, in the same place, gives this remarkable instance. A couple of beggars meeting Epiphanius, and knowing the charitableness of his temper, to draw the greater alms from him, agreed to put this trick upon him: one of them lies along upon the ground, feigning himself to be dead; the other standing by him, passionately bewailed the death of his companion, and his own poverty, not able to give him burial. Epiphanius pitied the man, persuaded him to bear his loss patiently, and not to expect that his companion should in this world rise any more, bid him take care for his burial, and withal gave him what was

[g] Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 27.

sufficient for it. No sooner was he gone out of sight, but the beggar comes to his companion, jogs him with his foot, and commends him for so ingeniously acting the cheat: "Rise, (said he,) and with what we have got let us be merry and jolly to-day." But, alas! the comedy was turned into a tragic scene; the man was really dead, and could not be recovered by all his cries or stirring; which his companion no sooner perceived, but with all haste makes after the bishop, cries and tears his hair, confesses the cheat, and begs that his companion might be restored to life; but all in vain: the bishop bids him be content, and tells him, that God would not undo what he had done. "Leaving a fair warning to men, (says the historian,) that the great God, who sees and hears all things, reckons those mockeries that are put upon his servants, as if done to himself." But this only upon occasion of that great charity which they then upon all occasions extended to the poor. The truth is, they then looked upon the poor as the treasure and ornament of the church, by whom, as by bills of exchange, they returned their estates into the other world. When Decius, the emperor, demanded of Laurentius,[h] the deacon of the church of Rome, the church's treasures, he promised after three days to produce them: in which time having gathered together the blind and the lame, the infirm and the maim, at the time appointed he brought them into the palace; and when the emperor asked for the treasures he had promised to bring with him, he shews him his company: "Behold, (said he,) these are the treasures of the church, those eternal treasures, which are never diminished, but increase; which are dispersed to every one, and yet found in all." This passage brings to my mind (though it more properly belongs to the next instance of charity) what Palladius[i] relates of Macarius, a presbyter, and governor of the hospital at Alexandria. There was a virgin in that city very rich, but infinitely covetous and uncharitable: she had been oft attempted and set upon by the persuasions of good men, but in vain: at last he caught her by this piece of pious policy. He comes to her, and tells her, that a parcel of jewels, emeralds and jacinths, of inestimable value, were lodged at his house, but which the owner was willing to part with for five hundred pieces of money, and advises her to

[h] Act. Laurent. apud Sur. ad diem 10 Aug. Vid. Ambr. Offic. l. ii. c. 28.
[i] Hist. Laus. c. 6.

buy them: she, catching at the offer, as hoping to gain considerably by the bargain, delivered him the money, and entreated him to buy them for her, knowing him to be a person of great piety and integrity. But hearing nothing from him a long time after, till meeting him in the church, she asked him what were become of the jewels? He told her, he had laid out the money upon them, (for he had expended it upon the uses of the hospital,) and desired her to come and see them; and if the purchase did not please her, she might refuse it. She readily came along with him to the hospital, in the upper rooms whereof the women were lodged, in the lower the men. He asked her, which she would see first, the jacinths, or the emeralds? which she leaving to him, he brought her first into the upper part, where the lame, blind, and cripple women were disposed; and see, said he, the jacinths that I spoke of: then carrying her down into the lower rooms, he shewed her the men in the like condition, and told her, "these are the emeralds that I promised, and jewels more precious than these, I think, are not to be found; and now, (said he,) if you like not your bargain, take your money back again." The woman blushed, and was troubled to think she should be haled to that which she ought to have done freely for the love of God. Afterwards she heartily thanked Macarius, and betook herself to a more charitable and Christian course of life.

Next to this, their charity appeared in visiting and assisting of the sick; contributing to their necessities, refreshing their tired bodies, curing their wounds or sores with their own hands. "The sick (saith the ancient author of the epistle in Justin Martyr,[l] if it be not Justin himself) are not to be neglected; nor is it enough for any to say, I have never learned to serve and give attendance: for he that shall make his delicacy or tenderness unaccustomed to any hardness to be an excuse in this case, let him know it may soon be his own; and then he will quickly discern the unreasonableness of his own judgment when the same shall happen to him, that he himself has done to others." But there were no such nice and squeamish stomachs in the good Christians of those times. St. Jerome[m] tells us of Fabiola, a Roman lady, a woman of considerable birth and fortunes, that she sold her estate, and dedicated the money to the uses of the

[l] Epist. ad Zen. et Seren. s. 17.

[m] Epitaph. Fabiolæ ad Ocean.

poor: she built an hospital, (and was the first that did so,) wherein she maintained and cured the infirm and miserable, or any sick that she met withal in the streets: here was a whole rendezvous of cripples, hundreds of diseases and distempers here met together, and herself at hand to attend them; sometimes carrying the diseased in her arms, or bearing them on her shoulders; sometimes washing and dressing those filthy and noisome sores, from which another would have turned his eyes with contempt and horror; otherwhile preparing them food, or giving them physic with her own hand. The like we read of Placilla, the empress,[n] wife to the younger Theodosius, that she was wont to take all possible care for the lame or wounded; to go home to their houses, carry them all necessary conveniencies, and to attend and assist them, not by the ministery of her servants and followers, but with her own hands. She constantly visited the common hospitals, attended at sick beds for their cure and recovery, tasted their broths, prepared their bread, reached them their provisions, washed their cups with her own hands, and underwent all other offices which the very meanest of the servants were to undergo. Thus also the historian[o] reports of Deogratias, the aged bishop of Carthage, under the Vandalic persecution, that having sold all the plate belonging to the church, to ransom the captive Christians, and wanting places conveniently to bestow them, he lodged them in two large churches, provided for the needy, took care of the sick, himself every hour visiting them both by day and night, with physicians attending him to superintend their cure, and diet suitable to their several cases, going from bed to bed to know what every one stood in need of. Nay, how often did they venture to relieve their brethren, when labouring under such distempers as seemed immediately to breathe death in their faces? Thus in that sad and terrible plague at Alexandria,[p] which though it principally raged amongst the Gentiles, yet seized also upon the Christians: "many of the brethren, (says the historian,) out of the excessive abundance of their kindness and charity, without any regard to their own health and life, boldly ventured into the thickest dangers, daily visiting, attending, instructing, and comforting their sick and infected

[n] Theodor. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 18.
[o] Vict. Utic. de persec. Vandal. l. i. c. 8.
[p] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 22.

brethren, till themselves expired and died with them: nay, many of them, whom they thus attended, recovered and lived, while they who had looked to them died themselves; as if, by a strange and prodigious charity, they had willingly taken their diseases upon them, and died themselves to save them from death." Thus it was with the Christians, while the Gentiles, in the mean time, put off all sense of humanity: when any began to fall sick amongst them, they presently cast them out, shunned their dearest friends and relations, left them half dead in the highways, and took no care of them either alive or dead.

And that this work of charity might be the better managed amongst Christians, they had in many places (and particularly in this of Alexandria) certain persons, whose proper office it was to attend and administer to the sick: they were called *parabolani*, (because, especially in pestilential and infectious distempers, they did, *παραβάλλεσθαι*, cast themselves into an immediate hazard of their lives,) and were peculiarly deputed *ad curanda debilium ægra corpora*, (as the law of the younger Theodosius[q] expresses it,) "to attend and cure the bodies of the infirm and sick." Their numbers, it seems, were very great, insomuch that, upon any tumultuary occasions, they became formidable even to the courts of civil judicature; upon complaint whereof made to the emperor, Theodosius reduced their number to five hundred; which being found too little, by a second constitution he enlarged it to six hundred. The truth is, these *parabolani* were a kind of clergy-physicians; for that they were under an ecclesiastical cognizance is plain, being reckoned up with the clergy, and accordingly, by the latter constitution of Theodosius, are appointed to be chosen by, and to be immediately subject to the bishop of the place.

A third instance of their love and charity (and which St. Ambrose[r] calls the highest piece of liberality) was their care of those that were in captivity, groaning under the merciless tyranny and oppression of their enemies, to relieve them under, and redeem them out of their bondage and slavery. Cyprian,[s] in a letter to the bishops of Numidia about this very thing, the redemption of those Christians amongst them that had been taken captive by the Barbarians, elegantly bewails their misery, and earnestly presses their redemption, and, as a help towards it, sent

[q] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. ii. de Episcopis, etc. ss. 42, 43.

[r] Offic. l. ii. c. 15.

[s] Epist. lxii. p. 147.

them *sestertium centum millia nummûm;* which Rigaltius[t] computes to twenty-five thousand pounds French; though others,[u] more truly, reduce it to a much lower sum, viz. seven thousand five hundred, or two thousand five hundred crowns; which he and his people had liberally contributed to it. Of Acacius, bishop of Amida, we read in Socrates,[x] that when the Roman army had taken seven thousand Persians captive, and would neither release them without a ransom, nor yet give them food to keep them alive; this good bishop, with the consent of the clergy of his church, caused all the gold and silver plate and vessels that belonged to their church to be melted down; ransomed the wretches, fed them, and then freely sent them home to their own prince: with which generous charity the king of Persia (as he well might) was strangely amazed, finding that the Romans knew how to conquer an enemy by kindness, no less than by force of arms. The like St. Ambrose relates of himself,[y] that he caused the communion plate of his church to be broken in pieces to redeem Christians taken captive by the enemy; for which though he was blamed by the Arian party, yet he elegantly defends the fact, as not only a justifiable, but a proper and eminent act of charity. And, indeed, it is the only case wherein the imperial constitutions make it lawful to sell or pawn the plate and gifts belonging to the church,[z] it being otherwise made sacrilege to receive them, and the things absolutely forfeited by those that bought them. This was very great, but yet we meet with a stranger charity than this in the primitive church, some that have parted with their own liberty to purchase freedom unto others: so St. Clemens assures us, in his famous epistle to the Corinthians,[a] "we have known many amongst ourselves, (says he,) who have delivered themselves into bonds and slavery that they might restore others to their liberty; many who have hired out themselves servants unto others, that by their wages they might feed and sustain them that wanted:" of which this one strange instance shall suffice. Under the Vandalic persecution many Christians were carried slaves out of Italy into Africa,[b] for whose redemption Paulinus, then bishop of Nola, had expended his whole estate; at last a widow comes

[t] Rigalt. in loc.
[u] Gronov. de pecun. vet. l. ii. c. 2.
[x] Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 21.
[y] Offic. l. ii. c. 28.
[z] Phot. Nomocan. Τιτ. β'. πέρ. ἐκκλησ. καὶ σκευῶν, etc. κεφ. β'. p. 43.
[a] Sect. 55.
[b] Greg. Mag. dial. l. iii. c. 1.

to him, entreats him to give her as much as would ransom her only son, then slave to the king of the Vandals' son-in-law: he told her he had not one penny left, nothing but his own person, and that he would freely give her to make her best of, and to procure her son's ransom; this the woman looked upon, from a person of his quality, as rather a deriding her calamity, than a pitying of her case: but he assured her he was in earnest, and at last induced her to believe him; whereupon they both took shipping for Africa, whither they were no sooner come, but the good bishop addressed himself to the prince, begged the release of the widow's son, and offered himself in his room. The issue was, the woman had her son restored her, and Paulinus became the prince's slave, who employed him in the dressing and keeping of his garden. How he afterwards ingratiated himself into the favour of his master, and came to be discovered to him who he was, how the prince set him at liberty, and gave him leave to ask what he would, which he made no further use of than to beg the release of all his countrymen then in bondage, which was accordingly granted, and all joyfully sent home, with their ships laden with corn and provisions, I omit, as not pertinent to my purpose; they that are desirous to know more of it may read it in the Dialogues of St. Gregory, from whence I have borrowed the story. This certainly was charity with a witness; an act that will find more to admire and commend it, than to imitate and follow it.

A fourth instance of primitive charity, was the great care they took about the bodies of the dead, in giving them decent, and, where they could, honourable burial: all men naturally have a kindness for their bodies, and therefore desire, that what has so long been the mansion of an immortal tenant, may, upon its dislodging, be orderly taken down, and the ruins of it laid up with honour and safety. Man's body, besides that it is the cabinet of an invaluable jewel, is a curious piece of artifice, fearfully and wonderfully made, the excellent contrivance of the divine omniscience, and in that respect challenges not to be carelessly thrown aside, or rudely trampled in the dirt. This seems to be the common sense of mankind, it being the care and practice of almost all nations in the world religiously to enshrine the remains of their deceased friends in tombs and sepulchres; thinking it but reasonable to testify so much kindness to their

departed friends, as to honour their memories, and to secure from rude barbarous violence what they left behind them when they put off mortality. Sure I am, this was eminently the care of Christians, no dangers or threatenings could affright them from doing this last office to their deceased brethren, especially such as had been martyrs and champions for the truth. The Roman clergy, in an epistle to them of Carthage,[c] reckon it as one of the greatest instances of charity, above that of relieving the poor, ministering to the sick, or the rest which they there enumerate and reckon up; tell them that it could not be neglected without great danger, and that fidelity in this matter would be highly acceptable to God, and rewarded by him. Dionysius[d] bishop of Alexandria, speaking of the plague that raged there, (which we mentioned but now,) commends the Christians for assisting their sick dying brethren, that they closed their eyes, laid them out, washed their bodies, dressed and adorned them up for burial, and carried them out upon their own shoulders; which they cheerfully did, notwithstanding the imminent danger that attended it, and that it was not long before others were called to do the same offices for them. Their bodies they decently committed to the ground, for they abhorred the custom, so common amongst the Gentiles, of burning the bodies of the dead; which they did, not (as the heathens objected) because they thought that their bodies once burnt to ashes would be difficultly brought to a resurrection, (a doctrine which they strenuously asserted,[e] and held fast, as the main pillar of their comfort and confidence,) but because they looked upon it as inhuman and barbarous, and contrary to the more ancient and better usage of mankind in this matter. Tertullian[f] calls this way of burial by inhumation a piece of piety; and tells us, they abstained from burning the corpse, not as some did, because they thought that some part of the soul remained in the body after death, but because it savoured of savageness and cruelty. Therefore their enemies, to do them the greater spite, did not only put them to death, but very often burn their dead bodies, and sprinkle their ashes into the sea, partly to hinder them from a decent burial, and partly (as in that tumult at Alexandria under Julian[g]) that nothing might be left of them to be honoured

[c] Epist. viii. inter Ep. Cyp. p. 18.
[d] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 22.
[e] Min. Fel. Octav. c. 8. et 34.
[f] De Anim. c. 51.
[g] Amm. Marcel. l. xxii. c. 7.

as the remains of martyrs. As Christianity got ground, this more civil way of inhumation did not only take place, but rooted out the contrary custom even amongst the Gentiles themselves. For though the emperor Theodosius the Great [h] gives some intimation of it, as remaining in his time, yet not long after it wholly ceased, as is expressly acknowledged by Macrobius,[i] who lived in the time of the younger Theodosius.

Nor did they ordinarily content themselves with a bare interment, but prepared the body for its funeral with costly spices, and rich odours and perfumes, not sparing the best drugs and ointments which the Sabeans could afford, as Tertullian [k] plainly testifies. They who, while alive, generally abstained from whatever was curious and costly, when dead were embalmed and entombed with great art and curiosity. Whence Eunapius [l] (much such a friend to Christianity as Julian or Porphyry) derides the monks and Christians of Egypt for honouring the seasoned and embalmed bones and heads of martyrs, such (says he) as the courts of justice had condemned, and put to death for their innumerable villanies. This cost the Christians doubtless bestowed upon the bodies of their dead, because they looked upon death as the entrance into a better life, and laid up the body as the candidate and expectant of a joyful and happy resurrection. Besides, hereby they gave some encouragement to suffering, when men saw how much care was taken to honour and secure the relics of their mortality, and that their bodies should not be persecuted after death.

This their enemies knew very well, and therefore many times denied them the civility and humanity of burial, to strike the greater dread into them. Thus Maximus the president threatened Tharacus the martyr,[m] that although he bore up his head so high, upon the confidence that after his death his body should be wound up and embalmed with ointments and odoriferous spices, yet he would defeat his hopes, by causing his body to be burnt, and sprinkling his ashes before the wind.

Thus, after they had put Polycarp to death, they burnt his body out of spite to the Christians, who had begged it of the proconsul, only to give it a solemn interment; whereupon ga-

[h] Cod. Theodos. lib. ix. tit. xvii. de Sep. viol. l. 6.
[i] Saturnal. l. vii. c. 7.
[k] Apol. c. 42.
[l] De vit. Philos. in vit. Ædes. p. 65.
[m] Act. SS. Tharas. Prob. et Andron. apud Baron. ad Ann. 299.

thering his bones, which the mercy of the fire had spared, they decently committed them to the earth, and there used to meet to celebrate the memory of that pious and holy man.[n]

During those times of persecution, they were very careful to bury the bodies of the martyrs, some making it their particular business by stealth to inter those in the night who had suffered in the day; this they did with great hazard and danger, many of them (as appears from the ancient martyrologies) suffering martyrdom upon this very account. Afterwards, when the church was settled, there was a particular order of men called *copiatæ*, (either ἀπὸ τοῦ κοπιᾶσθαι, from the pains they took, or else ἀπὸ τοῦ κοπάζειν, because they committed the bodies of the dead to the grave, the place of ease and rest,) appointed for this purpose about the time of Constantine, or, to be sure, his son Constantius, in two of whose laws they are expressly mentioned,[o] and in the latter said to be lately instituted. Their office (as Epiphanius [p] tells) was to wrap up and bury the bodies of the dead, to prepare their graves, and to inter them: and because inhumation and giving burial to the dead was ever accounted, in a more peculiar manner, a work of piety and religion; therefore these persons were reckoned, if not strictly clergymen, at least in a clergy relation, being in both laws of Constantius enumerated with and invested in the same immunities with the clergy. By the author in St. Jerome [q] they are styled *fossarii*, grave-makers, and by him placed in the first and lowest order of the *clerici*, and exhorted to be like good old Tobit in faith, holiness, knowledge, and virtue. In the great church of Constantinople they were called *decani*, or deans, (but quite distinct from the Palatine deans spoken of in the Theodosian Code,[r] and frequently elsewhere; who were a military order, and chiefly belonged to the emperor's palace,) they were one of the *collegia*, or corporations of the city. Their number was very great; Constantine is said to have appointed no less than eleven hundred of them: but by a law of Honorius and Theodosius,[s] they were reduced to nine hundred and fifty; till afterwards Anastasius brought them back to their former number, which was also ratified and confirmed by Justinian; their parti-

[n] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 15.

[o] Cod. Theod. lib. xiii. tit. i. de Lustr. Conl. l. 1. Lib. xvi. tit. ii. de Episc. l. 15.

[p] Expos. fid. cathol. c. 21.

[q] De Sept. Ordin. Eccl.

[r] Lib. vi. tit. de Decanis. l. 1.

[s] Cod. Theodos. lib. i. tit. ii. de SS. Eccles. l. 4.

cular duties and offices, both as relating to the dead, and all other things, are largely described in two Novel constitutions[t] of his to that purpose.

Nor did they only take care that the body might be prepared for its funeral, but to provide it of a decent and convenient sepulchre, wherein it might be honourably and securely laid up; a thing which had been always practised by the more sober and civilized part of mankind. Their burying-places (called *polyandria*, *cryptæ*, *arenaria*, but most commonly *cemeteria*, or "dormitories," because, according to the notion which the scriptures give us of the death of the righteous, Christians are not so properly said to die as to sleep in the Lord, and their bodies to rest in the grave in expectation of a joyful resurrection) were generally in the fields or gardens, it being prohibited by the Roman laws, and especially an ancient law of the twelve tables,[u] to bury within the city walls. This held for some centuries after Christianity appeared in the world, and longer it was before they buried within churches; within the outparts whereof to be interred, was a privilege at first granted only to princes and persons of the greatest rank and quality. Chrysostom assures us,[w] that Constantius the emperor reckoned he did his father, Constantine the Great, a peculiar honour, when he obtained to have him buried in the porch of the church which he had built at Constantinople to the memory of the apostles, and wherein he had earnestly desired to be buried, as Eusebius tells us;[x] and in the same many of his successors were interred; it not being in use then, nor some hundreds of years after, for persons to be buried in the body of the church, as appears from the *Capitula* of Charles the Great,[y] where burying in the church, which then it seems had crept into some places, is strictly forbidden.

During the first ages of Christianity, while the malice of their enemies persecuted them both alive and dead, their *cemeteria* were ordinarily under ground, imitating herein the custom of the Jews, whose sepulchres were in caverns and holes of rocks, though doubtless the Christians did it to avoid the rage and fury of their enemies; not so much upon the account of secrecy, for their frequent retiring to those places was so notorious, as could not escape

[t] Novel. Justin. xliii. et lix.
[u] Apud Cicer. de leg. l. ii.
[w] Hom. xxvi. in 2 ad Cor. xii. s. 4.
[x] De vit. Const. l. iv. c. 71.
[y] Lib. i. c. 159.

the observation of their enemies, and therefore we sometimes find the emperor's officers readily coming thither; but it was upon the account of that sacredness and religion that was reckoned to be due to places of this nature, it being accounted by all nations a piece of great impiety, *manes temerare sepultos*, to disturb and violate the ashes of the dead. They were large vaults, dug in dry sandy places, and arched over, and separated into many little apartments, wherein on either side the bodies of the martyrs lay in distinct cells, each having an inscription upon marble, whereon his name, quality, and probably the time and manner of his death were engraven: though in the heats of persecution they were forced to bury great numbers together in one common grave, (sixty, Prudentius tells us he observed,)[z] and then not the names, but only the number of the interred was written upon the tomb. Indeed, the multitudes of martyrs that then suffered required very large conveniencies of interment: and so they had, insomuch that the last publisher of the *Roma Subterranea* assures us,[a] that though those *cemeteria* were under ground, yet were they many times double, and sometimes treble, two or three stories, one still under another.

By reason thereof they must needs be very dark, having no light from without, but what peeped in from a few little crannies, which filled the place with a kind of sacred horror, as St. Jerome informs us;[b] who, while a youth, when he went to school at Rome, used upon the Lord's day to visit these solemn places. Built they were by pious and charitable persons, (thence called after their names,) for the interment of martyrs, and other uses of the church; for in these places, Christians, in times of persecution, were wont to hide themselves, and to hold their religious assemblies, when banished from their public churches, as I have formerly noted. Of these, about Rome only, Baronius,[c] out of the records in the Vatican, reckons up forty-three, and others to the number of threescore. We may take an estimate of the rest, by the account which Baronius[d] gives of one, called the Cemetery of Priscilla, discovered in his time, anno 1578, in the *Via Salaria*, about three miles from Rome, which he often viewed and searched: "it is (says he) strange to report, the place, by

[z] Prudent. Peri. Steph. Pass. Hippol. Mart. Hym. xi.
[b] Comment. in c. xl. Ezekiel.
[d] Ad Ann. 130. Vid. ad Ann. 57. n. 112.
[a] Lib. i. c. 2. n. 9.
[c] Ad Ann. 226.

reason of its vastness and variety of apartments, appearing like a city under ground." At the entrance into it there was a principal way or street, much larger than the rest, which, on either hand, opened into divers other ways, and those again divided into many lesser ways and turnings, like lanes and alleys within one another: and as in cities there are void open places for the markets, so here there were some larger spaces for the holding (as occasion was) of their religious meetings, wherein were placed the effigies and representations of martyrs, with places in the top to let in light, long since stopped up. The discovery of this place caused great wonder in Rome, being the most exact and perfect cemetery that had been yet found out. Thus much I thought good to add upon occasion of that singular care which Christians then took about the bodies of their dead. If any desire to know more of these venerable antiquities, they may consult *Onuphrius de Cœmeteriis*, and especially the Latin edition of the *Roma Subterranea*,[e] where their largest curiosity may be fully satisfied in these things.

Many other instances of their charity might be mentioned: their ready entertaining strangers, providing for those that laboured in the mines, marrying poor virgins, and the like, of which to treat particularly would be too vast and tedious. To enable them to do these charitable offices, they had not only the extraordinary contributions of particular persons, but a common stock and treasury of the church. At the first going abroad of the gospel into the world, so great was the piety and charity of the Christians, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common; neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." But this community of goods lasted not long in the church; we find St. Paul[f] giving order to the churches of Galatia and Corinth for weekly offerings for the saints, that upon the first day of the week (when they never failed to receive the sacrament) they should every one of them lay by him in store according as God had prospered him.

[e] Edit. a Paul. Aringhio. Rom. 1651. et Col. 1659.

[f] 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

This custom, Justin Martyr assures us,[g] still continued in his time; for, describing the manner of their assemblies on the Lord's day, he tells us, that those who were able and willing contributed what they saw good; and the collection was lodged in the hands of the bishop or president, and by him distributed for the relief of widows and orphans, the sick or indigent, the imprisoned or strangers, or any that were in need. In the next age they were reduced to monthly offerings, as appears from Tertullian,[h] who gives us this account of them in his time: that at their religious assemblies, upon a monthly day, (or oftener, if a man will and be able,) every one, according to his ability, laid by somewhat for charitable uses, (they put it into a kind of poor man's box, called *arca*, that stood in the church;) this they did freely, no man being forced or compelled to it, leaving it behind them as a stock to maintain piety and religion; for it is not spent (says he) upon feasts or drinking-bouts, or to gratify gluttony and intemperance, but laid out in relieving the needy, burying the dead, providing for orphans, supporting the aged, recruiting the spoiled, supplying the imprisoned, and those that were in mines, bonds, or slavery, for the profession of Christianity.

This was the fruit of primitive devotion. Palladius[i] tells us of two brothers, Paesius and Esaias, sons of a wealthy merchant, that their father being dead, and they resolving upon a more strict and religious course of life, could not agree upon settling their estates in the same way; at last, dividing their estates, they disposed them thus: the one gave away his whole estate at once, settling it upon monasteries, churches, and prisons, for the relief of such as were in bonds; and betaking himself to a trade for a small maintenance for himself, gave himself up to prayer, and the severer exercises of religion. The other kept his estate in his own possession, but built a monastery, and taking a few companions to dwell with him, entertained all strangers that came that way, took care of the sick, entertained the aged, gave to those that needed, and every Saturday and Lord's day caused two or three tables to be spread for the refreshment and entertainment of the poor; and in this excellent way spent his life.

Now that this account that we have given of the admirable bounty and charity of the ancient Christians is not precarious,

[g] Apol. i. s. 67. [h] Apol. c. 39. [i] Histor. Lausiac. c. 15.

and merely what the Christians tell us of themselves, we have the testimony of two open enemies of Christianity, Julian and Lucian, both bitter enemies to Christians, and the fiercer, because both, as it is supposed, apostates from them: and their testimony is considerable upon a double account; partly because having lived amongst the Christians they exactly knew their ways and manners; and partly because being enemies to them, they would be sure to speak no more in their commendation than what was true. Julian,[k] speaking of the Galileans, tells us, that by their charity to the poor they begot πολὺ τῆς αὐτῶν θεότητος θαῦμα, "the greatest admiration of their religion in the minds of men." And in an epistle to the high-priest of Galatia,[l] bewailing the desolate state of the heathen world, the ruin of their temples, and the great declension of paganism at that time, notwithstanding all his endeavours to make it succeed under the influences of his government, he advises the high-priest to promote the Gentile interest by the same method which the wicked religion of the Christians did thrive by, i. e. by their bounty to strangers, their care in burying of the dead, and their holiness of life. And elsewhere, "the poor (says he[m]) having no care taken of them, the wicked Galileans know very well how to make their advantage of it, for they give themselves up to humanity and charity, and by these plausible and insinuative ways strengthen and increase their wicked and pernicious party; just as men cheat little children with a cake, by two or three of which they tempt them to go along with them, till having got them from home, they clap them under hatches, transport and sell them, and so for a little seeming pleasure they are condemned to bitterness all their life: and no otherwise (says he) it is with them; they first inveigle honest-minded men with what they call their feasts of love, banquets, ministry and attendance upon tables, and then seduce them into their wickedness and impiety." This, as at once it shews his venom and malice according to the humour of the man, so it openly bears witness, out of the mouth of an enemy, to the most excellent and generous spirit of the gospel. The other testimony is that of Lucian, (who, if not a Christian himself, for Suidas's[n] δημηγόρος ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, does no way intimate him to have been a Christian preacher, notwithstanding

[k] Misapog. p. 99.
[l] Epist. xlix. ad Arsac. oper. par. ii. p. 203.
[m] Fragm. Epist. par. i. p. 557.
[n] In voc. Λουκιανός.

what the generality of writers have inferred thence, was yet however intimately acquainted with the affairs of Christians,) who bringing in his philosopher Peregrinus,[o] amongst other sects joining himself to the Christians, tells us what care they took of him: when cast into prison, they improved all their interest to have him released; but when this could not be granted, they officiously used all possible service and respect towards him. In the morning, old women, widows, and children flocked early to the prison doors, and the better sort got leave of the keepers to sleep with him in the prison all night; then they had several sorts of banquets, and their sacred discourses. Nay, some were sent in the name of the rest, even from the cities of Asia, to assist and encourage him, who brought him great sums of money, under pretence of his imprisonment; it being incredible what readiness they shew, when any such matter is once noised abroad, and how little they spare any cost in it. After which he tells us of them in general,[p] that they equally contemn all the advantages of this life, and account them common, foolishly taking up their principles about these things without any accurate search into them; insomuch, that if any subtle and crafty fellow, that knows how to improve his advantage, come amongst them, he grows very rich in a little time, by making a prey of that simple and credulous people.

There is one circumstance yet behind, concerning the love and charity of those times, very worthy to be taken notice of, and that is the universal extent of it, they "did good to all, though more especially to them of the household of faith," i. e. to Christians: they did not confine their bounty merely within the narrow limits of a party, this or that sect of men, but embraced an object of love and pity, wherever they met it. They were kind to all men, yea, to their bitterest enemies, and that with a charity as large as the circles of the sun, that visits all parts of the world, and shines as well upon a stinking dunghill as upon a pleasant garden. It is certainly the strange and supernatural doctrine of our Saviour, "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." This, indeed, is the

[o] De mort. Peregrin. vol. ii. p. 762, 763.

[p] Ibid. p. 764.

proper goodness and excellency of Christianity, as Tertullian observes,[q] it being common to all men to love their friends, but peculiar only to Christians to love their enemies. And Athenagoras,[r] I remember, principally makes use of this argument to prove the divinity of the Christian religion, and challenges all the great masters of reason and learning among the heathens to produce any, either of themselves or their disciples, of so pure and refined a temper, as could, instead of hating, love their enemies, bear curses and revilings with an undisturbed mind, and instead of reviling again, to bless and speak well of them, and to pray for them who lay in wait to take away their lives. And yet this did Christians; they embraced their enemies, pardoned and prayed for them, according to the apostle's rule, "When the enemy hungered they fed him, when he thirsted they gave him drink, and would not be overcome of evil, but overcame evil with good." When Nazianzen[s] (then bishop of Constantinople) lay sick, a young man came to his bed's feet, and taking hold of his feet, with tears and great lamentation passionately begged pardon of him for his wickedness: the bishop asking what he meant by it, he was told, that this was the person that had been suborned by a wicked party to have murdered him, and now being stricken with the conscience of so great a wickedness, came to bewail his sin. The good man immediately prayed to Christ to forgive him, desiring no other satisfaction from him, than that henceforth he would forsake that heretical party, and sincerely serve God as became a Christian. Thus when Paul[t] the martyr was hastening to his execution, he only begged so much respite till he might pray (which accordingly he did) not only for the peace and happiness of Christians, but for the conversion of Jews and Samaritans; for the Gentiles, that they might be brought out of error and ignorance to the knowledge of God and the true religion: he prayed for the people that attended his execution; nay, (such his vast goodness and charity,) for the very judge that condemned him; for the emperors, and the very executioner that stood ready to cut off his head, earnestly begging of God "not to lay that great wickedness to their charge." Nay, they did not think it enough not to return evil for evil, or barely to forgive their enemies,

[q] Ad Scap. c. 1.
[r] Leg. pro Christ. s. 11.
[s] Vit. ejus per Greg. Presb.
[t] Euseb. de Mart. Palest. c. 8.

unless they did them all the kindness that lay in their power. Polycarp plentifully feasted the very officers that were sent to apprehend him;[u] the same which St. Mamas the martyr is also said to have done,[x] treating the soldiers with the best supper he had, when sent by Alexander, the cruel president of Cappadocia, to seize upon him. And we read of one Pachomius,[y] an heathen soldier, in the first times of Constantine, that the army being well near starved for want of necessary provisions, and coming to a city that was most inhabited by Christians, they freely and speedily gave them whatever they wanted for the accommodation of the army. Amazed with this strange and unwonted charity, and being told that the people that had done it were Christians, whom they generally preyed upon, and whose profession it was to hurt no man, and to do good to every man, he threw away his arms, became an anchoret, and gave up himself to the strictest severities of religion. This also Julian the emperor plainly confesses:[z] for urging Arsacius, the chief-priest of Galatia, to take care of the poor, and to build hospitals in every city for the entertaining of poor strangers and travellers, both of their own and others' religions; he adds, "For it is a shame (says he) that when the Jews suffer none of theirs to beg, and the wicked Galileans relieve not only their own, but also those of our party, that we only should be wanting in so necessary a duty." So prevalent is truth, as to extort a confession from its most bitter and virulent opposers. Of this I shall only add one instance or two more, proper enough to be inserted here. Eusebius,[a] speaking of that dreadful plague and famine that happened in the eastern parts under the emperor Maximinus, wherein so many whole families miserably perished, and were swept away at once; he adds, that at this time the care and piety of the Christians towards all evidently approved itself to all the Gentiles that were about them; they being the only persons that during this sad and calamitous state of things performed the real offices of mercy and humanity; partly in ordering and burying of the dead, (thousands dying every day, of whom no care was taken,) partly in gathering together all the poor that were ready to starve, and distributed bread to every one of them.

[u] Euseb. l. iv. c. 15.
[x] Mart. ejus apud Sur. ad 17 Aug. ex S. Metaphr.
[y] Metaphr. in vit. Pachom. apud Sur. ad diem 14 Maii.
[z] Ubi supra.
[a] Hist. Eccl. l. ix. c. 8.

The fame whereof filled the ears and mouths of all men, who extolled the God of the Christians, and confessed that they had shewed themselves to be the only truly pious and religious persons. And, indeed, the charity was the more remarkable, in that the Christians at this very time were under a most heavy persecution. Thus in the terrible plague that in the times of Gallus and Volusian raged so much through the whole world, (and that more or less for fifteen years together,) especially at Carthage, when innumerable multitudes were swept away every day, and the streets filled with the carcases of the dead, which seemed to implore the help of the living, and to challenge it as their right by the common laws of human nature; but all in vain, every one trembling, flying, and shifting for themselves, deserting their nearest friends and kindred, none staying unless it was to make a prey. In this sad and miserable case, Cyprian[b] (then bishop of the place) calls the Christians together, instructs them in the duties of mercy and charity, puts them in mind, that it was no great wonder if their charity extended to their own party; the way to be perfect, was to do something more than heathens and publicans, to overcome evil with good, to imitate the divine benignity, to love our enemies, and (according to our Lord's advice) to pray for the happiness of them that persecute us; that God continually made his sun to rise, and his rain to fall, not only for the advantage of his own children, but for all other men's; and that therefore they should imitate the example of such a Father, who professed themselves to be his children. Immediately upon this they unanimously agreed to assist their common enemies, every one lending help according to his rank and quality. Those who, by reason of their poverty, could contribute nothing to the charge, did what was more, they personally wrought and laboured, an assistance beyond all other contributions. By which large and abundant charity great advantage redounded, not to themselves only of the household of faith, but universally unto all.

I shall sum up what hath been said upon this argument, in that elegant discourse which Lactantius[c] has concerning works of mercy and charity. "Since human nature (says he) is weaker than that of other creatures, who come into the world armed with offensive and defensive powers, therefore our wise Creator

[b] Pont. in vit. Cypr. p. 5. [c] Lact. Epitom. c. 7.

has given us a tender and merciful disposition, that we might place the safeguard of our lives in the mutual assistances of one another. For being all created by one God, and sprung from one common parent, we should reckon ourselves akin, and obliged to love all mankind; and (that our innocency may be perfect) not only not to do an injury to another, but not to revenge one when done to ourselves; for which reason also we are commanded to pray for our very enemies. We ought therefore to be kind and sociable, that we may help and assist each other. For being ourselves obnoxious to misery, we may the more comfortably hope for that help, in case we need it, which ourselves have given unto others. And what can more effectually induce us to relieve the indigent, than to put ourselves into their stead who beg help from us? If any be hungry, let us feed him; is he naked, let us clothe him; if wronged by a powerful oppressor, let us rescue and receive him. Let our doors be open to strangers, and such who have not where to lay their head. Let not our assistance be wanting to widows and orphans. And (which is a mighty instance of charity) let us redeem the captived, visit and assist the sick, who are able to take no care of themselves; and for strangers, and the poor, (in case they die,) let us not suffer them to want the conveniency of a grave. These are the offices and the works of mercy, which whoever does, offers up a true and grateful sacrifice to God; who is not pleased with the blood of beasts, but the charity of men; whom therefore he treats upon their own terms, has mercy on them whom he sees merciful, and is inexorable to those who shut up their bowels against them that ask them. In order, therefore, to our thus pleasing God, let us make light of money, and transmit it into the heavenly treasures, 'where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal,' nor tyrants are are able to seize and take it from us; but where it shall be kept to our eternal advantage, under the custody of God himself."

CHAPTER III.

OF THEIR UNITY AND PEACEABLENESS.

The laws of Christ tend to beget a peaceable disposition. This seen in our Saviour himself, in his apostles, and the whole body of Christians. The account Justin Martyr

gives of them. The world overrun with quarrels before Christ's coming. The happy alteration that succeeded upon his appearance in it. This particularly urged by Eusebius, how much Christians contributed to the peace and quietness of the world. Their unity among themselves. Canonical epistles; the several sorts of them; Συστατικαὶ, Ἀπολυτικαὶ, Εἰρηνικαί. What their nature and tendency. Differences presently endeavoured to be healed. The great care and solicitude of Constantine that way. An eminent instance of condescension and self-denial in Gregory Nazianzen for the peace of the church. Difference in rituals and lesser matters no hinderance of peace and Christian communion; manifested in the case of Polycarp and Anicetus bishop of Rome. Christians not provoked by every trifling quarrel. The difference in this respect between them and the best philosophers.

The primitive Christians being of such a meek, compassionate, and benevolent temper, as we have represented them, it cannot be thought but that they were of a very quiet disposition and peaceable conversation; and the having been so large in that, will excuse me for being shorter in this. When our blessed Saviour came to establish his religion in the world, he gave a law suitable to his nature, and to the design of his coming into the world, and to the exercise of his government, as he is Prince of Peace; a law of mildness and gentleness, of submission and forbearance towards one another; we are commanded to "follow peace with all men, to follow after the things that make for peace, as much as in us lies to live peaceably with all men." We are forbidden all feuds and quarrels, enjoined "not to revenge ourselves, but to give place unto wrath; to let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from us, with all malice; to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake forgives us." These are the laws of Christianity, which, whenever they are duly entertained, produce the most gentle and goodnatured principles, the most innocent and quiet carriage. This eminently appeared in the life of our blessed Saviour, who was the most incomparable instance of kindness and civility, of peace and quietness; we never find him all his life treating any with sharpness and severity but the Scribes and Pharisees, who were a pack of surly, malicious, ill-natured fellows, and could be wrought upon by no other methods; otherwise his mildness and humility, the affability and obligingness of his conversation, and his remarkable kindness to his greatest enemies, were sufficiently obvious both in his life and death; and such was the temper of his disciples and followers, this excellent spirit (like

leaven) spreading itself over the whole mass of Christians, turning the briar into a myrtle tree, and the vulture into a dove. See the account which Justin the Martyr gives of them.[d] "We, who formerly valued our money and estates before all things else, do now put them into a common stock, and distribute them to those that are in need. We, who once hated each other, and delighted in mutual quarrels and slaughters, and, according to the custom, refused to sit at the same fire with those who were not of our own tribe and party; now, since the appearance of Christ in the world, live familiarly with them, pray for our enemies, and endeavour to persuade those that unjustly hate us to order their lives according to the excellent precepts of Christ, that so they may have good hope to obtain the same rewards with us from the great Lord and Judge of all things."

But for the better understanding of this, it may be useful to observe, what a remarkable alteration in this respect the Christian religion made in the world. Before Christ's coming, the world was generally overrun with feuds and quarrels, mighty and almost implacable animosities and divisions reigning amongst Jews and Gentiles; the Jews looked upon the Gentiles as dogs and outcasts, refused all dealings with them, even to the denial of courtesies of common charity and civility, such as to tell a man the way,[e] or to give him a draught of water;[f] they reproached them as the vilest and most profligate part of mankind; sinners of the Gentiles, as the apostle calls them,[g] according to the usual style and title. Nor did the Gentiles less scorn and deride the Jews, as a pitiful and contemptible generation, stopping their noses, and abhorring the very sight of them, if by chance they met them; they looked upon them as an unsociable people, as enemies of all nations, that did not so much as wish well to any; nay, as haters even of mankind, as Tacitus[h] and their enemies in Josephus[i] represent them. The effect of all which was, that they oppressed and persecuted them in every place, trod them as dirt under their feet, till at the last the Romans came, and finally took away both their place and nation. Thus stood the case between them till the arrival of the Prince of Peace; who, partly by his death, whereby he broke down the

[d] Apol. i. s. 14. [e] Job iv. 9. [f] Juv. Sat. xiv. 96, etc.
[g] Gal. ii. 15. [h] Hist. l. v. c. 4, 5.
[i] Antiq. Judaic. l. xi. c. 6. Vid. Esther iii. 8. Vid. Cic. pro Flac. vol. ii. p. 368.

partition-wall between Jew and Gentile, partly by the healing nature and tendency of his doctrine, partly by the quiet and peaceable carriage of his followers, did quickly extirpate and remove those mutual feuds and animosities, and silence those passionate and quarrelsome divisions that were amongst them.

This argument Eusebius [k] particularly prosecutes and shews, that while the nations were under paganism and idolatry, they were filled with wars and troubles, and all the effects of barbarous rage and fury; but that after the divine and peaceable doctrine of our Saviour came abroad, those differences and calamities began to cease, according to the predictions that were of him, that "there should be righteousness and abundance of peace in his days; that men should beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; that nation should not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more;" that this must needs be in some measure the effect of his appearance, his doctrine being so fitly calculated to soften the rough and brutish manners of men, and to train them up in milder and more human institutions. And a little after he makes it an uncontrollable argument of the truth and excellency of the Christian doctrine, that it teaches men to bear the reproaches and provocations of enemies with a generous and unshaken mind, and to be able not to revenge ourselves, by falling foul upon them with the like indignities and affronts; to be above anger and passion, and every inordinate and unruly appetite; to administer to the wants and necessities of the helpless, and to embrace every man as our kindred and countryman, and though reputed a stranger to us, yet to own him, as if by the law of nature he were our nearest friend and brother. How much their religion contributed to the public tranquillity by forbidding pride, passion, covetousness, and such sins as are the great springs of confusion and disturbance, Justin Martyr [l] tells the emperors: "as for peace, (says he,) we, above all men in the world, promote and further it; forasmuch as we teach that no wicked man, no covetous or treacherous person, no good or virtuous man can lie hid from the eye of God, but that every man is travelling either towards an eternal happiness or misery, according to the desert and nature of his works: and did all

[k] Præpar. Evang l. i. c. 4. Vid. Athanas. de Verb. Incarn. s. 52.

[l] Apol. i. s. 12.

men know and believe this, no man would dare for a few moments to deliver up himself to vice and wickedness, knowing it would lead him on to the condemnation of everlasting fire; but would rather by all means restrain himself, and keep within the bounds of virtue, that he might obtain the rewards that are dispensed by God, and avoid the punishments that are inflicted by him." The truth is, our blessed Lord came not to inspire men with principles of revenge and passion, to teach them to return evil for evil, but to encourage love and gentleness, to teach men to overcome by suffering, and to obtain the reward by meekness and patience. Isidore [m] the Pelusiot, treating of that place, "to him that smites thee on the right cheek, turn the other also," has this short discourse upon it: "the great King of heaven came down from above to deliver to the world the laws of an heavenly conversation; which he has proposed in a way of conflict and striving, quite contrary to that of the Olympic games. There, he that fights and gets the better, receives the crown; here, he that is stricken, and bears it meekly, has the honour and applause: there, he that returns blow for blow, here, he that turns the other cheek, is celebrated in the theatre of angels: for the victory is measured not by revenge, but by a wise and generous patience. This is the new law of crowns, this is the new way of conflicts and contentions."

Such was the temper, such the carriage of Christians towards their enemies, and them that were without; within themselves they maintained the most admirable peace and harmony, and were in a manner of one heart and soul: they lived in the strictest amity, and abhorred all division as a plague and firebrand. But because men's understandings not being all of one size, nor all truths alike plain and evident, differences in men's judgments and opinions must needs arise; no schism ever arose in the church about any of the more considerable principles of religion, but it was presently bewailed with the universal resentment of all pious and good men, and the breach endeavoured to be made up; no ways left unattempted, no methods of persuasion omitted, that might contribute to it.

When Novatus (or rather Novatian) had made some disturbance in the church of Rome, concerning the receiving the lapsed into communion,[n] Dionysius (the good bishop of Alex-

[m] Epist. 127. l. iii.

[n] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 45.

andria) writes to him to extinguish the schism, tells him it is better to suffer any thing than that the church of God should be rent in pieces; that it is no less glorious, and probably more illustrious, to suffer martyrdom to keep division out of the church, than to die for not sacrificing to idols; for in the one case a man suffers martyrdom only upon his own account, but in the other he suffers for the advantage and benefit of the whole church. And Cyprian positively asserts,[o] (according to the apostle's resolution of the case,) that without this unity and charity "a man cannot enter into heaven;" and that although he should deliver up himself to the flames, or cast his body to wild beasts, yet this would not be the crown of his faith, but the punishment of his falsehood; not the glorious exit of a religious virtue, but the issue of despair: such a one may be killed, but he cannot be crowned.—He that rends the unity of the church, destroys the faith, disturbs the peace, dissolves charity, and profanes the holy sacrament. How severely they branded all schism and division in the church, how industriously they laboured to take up all controversies amongst Christians, and to reconcile dissenting brethren, to maintain concord and agreement amongst themselves, and to prevent all occasions of quarrel and dissension, might be easily made to appear out of the writers of those times. Hence those canonical epistles (as they called them) wherewith persons were wont to be furnished when going from one place to another; of which there were especially three sorts. First, Συστατικαὶ, or "commendatory" epistles, mentioned by St. Paul, and were in use amongst the heathens. They were granted to clergymen going into another diocese, by the bishop that ordained them, testifying their ordination, their soundness and orthodoxy in the faith, the innocency and the unblamableness of their lives. To those that had been under, or had been suspected of excommunication, declaring their absolution, and recommending them to be received in the number of the faithful. Lastly, they were granted to all, whether clergy or laity, that were to travel, as tickets of hospitality, that wherever they came, upon the producing these letters they might be known to be catholic and orthodox, and as such received and entertained by them: a piece of prudence which Julian the Apostate[p] admired in the Christian constitution,

[o] De unit. Eccl. p. 114.

[p] Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 16. Naz. Orat. in Jul. i. p. 102.

the like whereto he endeavoured to establish in his pagan reformation. The second sort were *Ἀπολυτικαὶ*, "letters dimissory," whereby leave was given to persons going into another diocese, either to be ordained by the bishop of that place, or if ordained already, to be admitted and incorporated into the clergy of that church: upon which account the ancient councils every where provide, that no stranger shall either receive ordination at the hands of another bishop, or exercise any ministerial act in another diocese, without the consent and dimissory letters of the bishop of that place from whence he comes. The third were *Εἰρηνικαὶ*, "letters of peace," granted by the bishop to the poor that were oppressed, and such as fled to the church for its protection and assistance; but especially to such of the clergy as were to go out of one diocese into another, it being directed to the bishop of that diocese, that he would receive him, that so he might take no offence, but that peaceable concord and agreement might be maintained between them. By these arts, the prudence of those times sought to secure the peace of the church, and, as much as might be, prevent all dissensions that might arise. And where matters of any greater moment fell out, how quickly did they flock together to compose and heal them?

Hence those many synods and councils that were convened to umpire differences, to explain or define articles of faith, to condemn and suppress the disturbers of the church and innovators in religion. What infinite care did the good emperor Constantine take for composing the Arian controversies, which then began first to infect and overrun the world? How much his heart was set upon it, his solicitous thoughts taken up about it? how many troublesome days and restless nights it cost him? with what strong and nervous arguments, what affectionate entreaties, he presses it, may be seen in that excellent letter (yet extant in his Life[q]) which he wrote to the authors of those impious and unhappy controversies. But when this would not do, he summoned the great council of Nice, consisting of three hundred and eighteen bishops: and in his speech, at the opening of that council,[r] conjured them, by all that was dear and sacred, to agree, and to compose those dissensions which were risen in the church; which he seriously protested he looked upon as more grievous and dangerous than any war whatsoever, and that they created

[q] Euseb. de vit. Const. l. ii. c. 64, et seq.

[r] Ibid. l. iii. c. 12.

greater trouble and inquietude to his mind than all the other affairs of his empire. And when several of the bishops, then in council,[s] had preferred libels and accusations one against another, without ever reading them, he bundled and sealed them all up together, and having reconciled and made them friends, produced the papers, and immediately threw them into the fire before their faces: so passionately desirous was that good prince to extinguish the flames, and to redeem the peace of the church at any rate. Were any ejected and thrown out of the church, of which there might be a suspicion of private grudges or designs, the Nicene council wisely provided,[t] that in every province a synod should be held twice a year, where all the bishops meeting together might discuss the case, and compose the difference; or (as Joseph the Egyptian, in his Arabic version of that canon, tells us) an arbitrator was to be appointed between the differing parties, to take up the quarrel, that it might not be a scandal to religion.

Nor did there want meek and peaceable-minded men, who valued the public welfare before any private and personal advantage, and could make their own particular concerns strike sail, when the peace and interest of the church called for it. When great contests and confusions were raised by some perverse and unquiet persons about the see of Constantinople, (then possessed by Gregory Nazianzen,) he himself stood up in the midst of the assembly,[u] and told the bishops how unfit it was, that they, who were preachers of peace to others, should fall out amongst themselves, begged of them, even by the sacred Trinity, to manage their affairs calmly and peaceably; and "if I (says he) be the Jonas that raises the storm, throw me into the sea, and let these storms and tempests cease. I am willing to undergo whatever you have a mind to; and though innocent and unblamable, yet for your peace and quiet sake am content to be banished the throne, and to be cast out of the city; only, according to the prophet's counsel, 'be careful to love truth and peace:'" and therewith freely resigned his bishopric, though legally settled in it by the express command and warrant of the emperor, and the universal desires and acclamations of the people.

The same excellent temper ruled in St. Chrysostom, one of his

[s] Theodor. Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 11.
[t] Can. 5.
[u] Vit. Greg. Naz. per Greg. Presb.

successors in that see, when having elegantly pressed the unity of the church, and refuted those petty cavils which his adversaries had made against himself: "but if you (says he to his people[w]) suspect these things of us, we are ready to deliver up our place and power to whomsoever you will; only let the church be preserved in peace and unity." This was the brave and noble disposition of mind to which St. Clemens sought to reduce the Corinthians, after they had fallen into a little schism and disorder: "who is there among you (says he[x]) of that generous temper, that compassionate and charitable disposition? Let him say, if this sedition, these schisms and contentions, have arisen through my means, or upon my account, I will depart and be gone whithersoever you please, and will do what the people shall command; only let Christ's sheepfold, together with the elders that are placed over it, be kept in peace."

Nay, when good men were most zealous about the main and foundation articles of faith, so as sometimes rather to hazard peace than to betray the truth, yet in matters of indifferency, and such as only concerned the rituals of religion, they mutually bore with one another, without any violation of that charity which is the great law of Christianity. Thus in that famous controversy about the keeping of Easter, so much agitated between the Eastern and Western churches, Irenæus,[y] in a letter to pope Victor, (who, of all that ever sat in that chair, had raised the greatest stirs about it,) tells him, that bishops in former times, however they differed about the observation of it, yet always maintained an entire concord and fellowship with one another, the churches being careful to maintain a peaceable communion, though differing in some particular rites and ceremonies, yea, even when their rites and customs seemed to clash by meeting together at the same place. Thus, when Polycarp came to Rome from the churches of the East, to treat with pope Anicetus about this and some other affairs, though they could not satisfy each other to yield the controversy, yet they kissed and embraced one another with mutual endearments, received the holy communion together; and Anicetus (to do the greater honour to Polycarp) gave him leave to celebrate and consecrate the eucharist in his church, and at last they parted

[w] Hom. xi. in Ep. ad Eph. s. 5.

[x] Ep. ad Cor. s. 54.

[y] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 24.

in great peace and friendship; the difference of the observation not at all hindering the agreement and harmony of the churches, it being agreed amongst them by common consent, (says Sozomen [z] speaking of this passage,) that in keeping this festival, they should each follow their own custom, but by no means break the peace and communion that was between them; for they reckoned it (says he) a very foolish and unreasonable thing, that they should fall out for a few rites and customs, who agreed in the main principles of religion.

The Christians of those times had too deeply imbibed that precept of our Saviour, "love one another as I have loved you," to fall out about every nice and trifling circumstance; no, when highliest provoked and affronted, they could forbear and forgive their enemies, much more their brethren, and were not like the waspish philosophers amongst the heathens, who were ready to fall foul upon one another for every petty and inconsiderable difference of opinion that was amongst them. So Origen tells Celsus,[a] "both amongst your philosophers and physicians (says he) there are sects that have perpetual feuds and quarrels with each other; whereas we, who have entertained the laws of the blessed Jesus, and have learned both to speak and to do according to his doctrine, 'bless them that revile us: being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat.' Nor do we speak dire and dreadful things against those that differ from us in opinion, and do not presently embrace those things which we have entertained; but (as much as in us lies) we leave nothing unattempted that may persuade them to change for the better, and to give up themselves only to the service of the great Creator, and to do all things as those that must give an account of their actions." In short, Christians were careful not to offend either God or men, but to keep and maintain peace with both; thence that excellent saying of Ephraem Syrus,[b] the famous deacon of Edessa, when he came to die: "In my whole life (said he) I never reproached my Lord and Master, nor suffered any foolish talk to come out of my lips; nor did I ever curse or revile any man, or maintain the least difference or controversy with any Christian in all my life."

[z] Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 19.

[a] Lib. v. s. 63.

[b] Vit. Ephr. Syr. per Greg. Nyss. vol. ii. p. 1033.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THEIR OBEDIENCE AND SUBJECTION TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Magistracy the great band of public peace. This highly secured by Christianity. The laws of Christ that way express and positive. Made good in his own practice, and the practice of his apostles. The same spirit in succeeding ages, manifested out of Justin Martyr, Polycarp, Tertullian, and Origen. Praying for rulers and emperors a solemn part of their public worship. Their ready payment of all customs and tributes, and their faithfulness in doing it. Christians such even under the heaviest oppressions and persecutions, and that when they had power to have righted and revenged themselves. An excellent passage in Tertullian to that purpose. The temper of the Christian soldiers in Julian's army. The famous story of Mauricius and the Thebæan legion under Maximianus reported at large out of Eucherius Lugdunensis. The injustice of the charge brought against them by the heathens, of being enemies to civil government. Accused of treason. Of their refusing to swear by the emperor's genius. Their denying to sacrifice for the emperor's safety, and why they did so. Their refusing to own the emperors for gods, and why. Their not observing the solemn festivals of the emperors, and the reasons of it. Accused of sedition, and holding unlawful combinations. An account of the *collegia* and societies in the Roman empire. Christianity forbidden upon that account. The Christian assemblies no unlawful conventions. A vast difference between them and the unlawful factions forbidden by the Roman laws. Their confident challenging their enemies to make good one charge of disturbance or rebellion against them. Their laws and principles quite contrary. The heathens themselves guilty of rebellions and factions, not the Christians. The testimony given them by Julian the emperor. A reflection upon the church of Rome for corrupting the doctrine and practice of Christianity in this affair. Their principles and policies in this matter. Bellarmine's position, that it is lawful to depose infidel and heretical princes, and that the primitive Christians did it not to Nero, Dioclesian, &c. only because they wanted power, censured and refuted. This contrary to the avowed principles of honest heathens.

How much Christian religion, transcribed into the lives of its professors, contributes to the happiness of men, not only in their single and private capacities, but as to the public welfare of human societies, and to the common interests and conveniencies of mankind, we have already discovered in several instances; now because magistracy and civil government is the great support and instrument of external peace and happiness, we shall, in the last place, consider how eminent the first Christians were for their submission and subjection to civil government. And certainly there is scarce any particular instance wherein primitive Christianity did more triumph in the world, than in their exemplary obedience to the powers and magistrates under which

they lived; honouring their persons, revering their power, paying their tribute, obeying their laws, where they were not evidently contrary to the laws of Christ, and where they were submitting to the most cruel penalties they laid upon them, with the greatest calmness and serenity of soul. The truth is, one great design of the Christian law is to secure the interests of civil authority; our Saviour has expressly taught us, "that we are to give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, as well as unto God the things that are God's." And his apostle spoke as plainly as words could speak it; "let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. Wherefore you must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour." Where we may take notice both of the strictness and universality of the charge, (and what is mainly material to observe,) this charge given the Romans, at that time when Nero was their emperor, who was not only an heathen magistrate, but the first persecutor of Christians, a man so prodigiously brutish and tyrannical, that the world scarce ever brought forth such another monster, *θηρίον ἐν μορφῇ ἀνθρώπου*, as the orator[c] truly styles him, "a beast in the shape of a man." The same apostle, amongst other directions given to Titus for the discharge of his office, bids him "put the people in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates." St. Peter delivers the same doctrine to a tittle: "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well; for so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

Such are the commands, and such was the practice of Christ and his apostles. When a tax was demanded of him, though he was the Son of God, he refused not to pay tribute unto Cæsar,

[c] Themist. Orat. v. p. 144.

even when it put him to the expense and charges of a miracle. When arraigned for his life at Pilate's bar, he freely owned his authority, and cheerfully submitted to that wicked and unrighteous sentence, though able to command more than twelve legions of angels for his rescue and deliverance. The apostles, though unjustly scourged before the council, yet made no tart reflections, but went away rejoicing. When Herod had cut off St. James's head, and consigned Peter in prison to the same butchery and execution, what arms did the Christians use? rise up and put him out of the throne, scatter libels, raise tumults or factions in the city? Oh, no, the church's weapons were prayers and tears, their only refuge in those evil times.

Nor did this excellent spirit die with the apostles; we find the same temper ruling in the succeeding ages of Christianity. "The Christians (says one of the ancients[d]) obey the laws that are made, and by the exactness of their lives go beyond that accuracy which the law requires of them; they love all men, though all men study to afflict and persecute them." "Are there any (as Athenagoras[e] concludes his address to the emperors) more devoted to you than we? who pray for the happiness of your government; that, according to right and equity, the son may succeed his father in the empire; that your dominions may be enlarged, and that all things may prosper that you take in hand: and this we do as that which turns both to your and our own advantage, that so under you, leading a quiet and peaceable life, we may cheerfully obey all those commands which you lay upon us." St. Polycarp,[f] a little before his martyrdom, wrote to the Christians at Philippi, earnestly exhorting them all to obey their rulers, and to exercise all patience and long-suffering towards them. And when he stood before the proconsul, he told him,[g] that this was the great law of Christianity, "that we are commanded by God to give all due honour and obedience to princes and potentates, such as is not prejudicial to us;" i. e. (for so, doubtless, he means,) such as is not contrary to the principles of our religion. Tertullian tells us,[h] it was a solemn part of the church service in his time, to pray for the happiness and prosperity of the princes under whom they lived: "we pray (says he) for the emperors, for the grandees,

[d] Just. Mart. Epist. ad Diogn. s. 5.
[e] Leg. pro Christian. s. 37.
[f] Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 36.
[g] Ibid. l. iv. c. 15.
[h] Apol. c. 39.

and ministers of state; for the prosperity of the age, for the quietness of affairs, for the continuance of their lives and government; that God would give them a long life, a secure reign, an undisturbed house, powerful armies, faithful senators, honest subjects, a quiet people, and, indeed, whatever they can wish for, either as men or emperors." "They that think (says he[j]) that we are not solicitous about the safety of princes, let them look into the commands of God recorded in our scriptures, which we freely expose to the view of all; there they will find that we are enjoined to pray for the happiness of our very enemies and persecutors; and who are so much such as they? And yet we are plainly and particularly commanded to 'pray for kings, for princes, and all that are in authority, that the state of things may be quiet and peaceable.' A Christian being an enemy to no man, is much less so to his prince." Thus when Celsus seemed to object, as if the Christians refused to help the emperor in their wars, Origen answers,[k] that they did really assist and help him, and that rather with divine than human weapons, according to the command of the apostle, "I exhort, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all that are in authority." And he tells him, that the more eminent any man is for piety and religion, he will be able to afford greater assistance to his prince, than a great many armed soldiers that stand ready to fight for him, and to destroy his enemies.

For all customs and tributes none ever paid them more freely than they. "For your taxes and tributes, (says Justin Martyr[l] to the emperors,) we are above all other men every where ready to bring them in to your collectors and officers, being taught so to do by our great Master, who bade those that asked the question, whether they might pay tribute unto Cæsar, 'to give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that God's.' For which reason we worship none but God: and as for you, in all other things we cheerfully serve you, acknowledging you to be emperors and governors of men, and praying that, together with your imperial power, you may have a wise and discerning judgment and understanding." "If the emperor command me to pay tribute, (says another[m] of their apologists,) I am ready to do it; if my Lord command me

[j] Ibid. c. 31.
[k] Contra Cels. l. viii. s. 73.
[l] Apol. i. s. 17.
[m] Tatian. Orat. contra Græc. s. 4.

to serve and obey him, I confess my obligation to it. Man is to be served with that respect that is due to man; but God only, who is invisible and incomprehensible, is to be religiously feared and honoured: if commanded to deny him, I must disobey, and die rather than be found perfidious and ungrateful to him." So Tertullian tells them,[n] that although they refused to pay the taxes rated upon them for maintenance of the heathen temples, yet for all other tributes they had cause to give the Christians thanks for so faithfully paying what was due, it being their principle to abstain from defrauding of others; insomuch, that should they examine their accounts how much of the assessments was lost by the fraud and cozenage of them of their own party, they would easily find that the Christians' denial to pay that one tax was abundantly compensated and made up in their honest payment of all the rest. The truth is, they were admirably exact and conscientious, as in all their actions, so especially in those that related to the public, and concerned their duty and obedience to their rulers and governors.

Nor were they thus only in prosperous times, but under the heaviest persecutions, as indeed the rod was seldom off their backs. The last-mentioned apologist[o] bids their judges go on to butcher them; and tells them, they did but force those souls out of their bodies, which were praying to God for the emperor's happiness, even while their officers were doing of it. And Cyprian[p] tells the proconsul, that as badly as they were used, yet they ceased not to pray for the overthrow and expulsion of the common enemies, for seasonable showers, and either for the removing or mitigating public evils; begging of God, day and night, with the greatest instance and importunity, for the peace and safety of their persecutors, endeavouring to pacify and propitiate God, who was angry with the iniquities of the age. Nor were they thus kind and good natured, thus submissive and patient for want of power, and because they knew not how to help it: Tertullian[q] answers in this case, that if they thought it lawful to return evil for evil, they could in one night, with a few firebrands, plentifully revenge themselves; that they were no small and inconsiderable party, and that they needed not betake themselves to the little arts of skulking revenges, being able to appear in the capacity of open enemies; that though but of

[n] Apol. c. 42.
[o] Cap. 30.
[p] Ad Demet. p. 192.
[q] Apol. c. 37.

yesterday's standing, yet they had filled all places, all offices of the empire; and what wars were not they able to manage, who could so willingly give up themselves to be slain; did not the law of Christianity oblige them to be killed rather than to kill? nay, that they need not take up arms and rebel; for their party was so numerous, that should they but agree together to leave the Roman empire, and to go into some remote corner of the world, the loss of so many members would utterly ruin it, and they would stand amazed and affrighted at that solitude and desolation that would ensue upon it, and have more enemies than loyal subjects left amongst them; whereas now they had the fewer enemies for having so many Christians.

The Christians then opposed not their enemies with the points of their swords, but with solid arguments and mild entreaties. Thus when Julian the emperor urged his army, which was almost wholly made up of Christians, to wicked counsels, and the practices of idolatry, they withstood him only with prayers and tears, "accounting this (says my author[r]) to be the only remedy against persecution." So far were they from resisting or rebelling, that they could quietly die at the emperor's command, even when they had power lying at their feet. I cannot, in this place, omit the memorable instance of the Thebæan legion, being so exceedingly apposite and pertinent to my purpose, and so remarkable as no age can furnish out another instance: I shall set down the story entirely out of the author himself,[s] the account of their martyrdom written by Eucherius bishop of Lyons, who assures us he received the relation from very credible hands; and it is thus.

Maximianus Cæsar, (whom Dioclesian had lately taken to be his colleague in the empire,) a bad man, and a bitter persecutor of the Christians, was sent into France, to suppress a mutiny and rebellion risen there; to strengthen his army, there was added to it a band of Christians, called the Thebæan legion, consisting (according to the manner of the Romans) of six thousand, six hundred, and sixty-six faithful, expert, and resolute soldiers. Coming to Octodurus, (a place in Savoy,) and being ready to offer sacrifice to the gods, he causes his army to come together,

[r] Naz. invect. i. in Jul. p. 94.

[s] Mart. SS. Maricii et socior. ab Eucher. Lugdunens. conscript. apud Sur. ad diem 22 Sept. p. 220, etc. edit. Colon. 1618.

and commands them, under a great penalty, to swear by the altars of their gods, that they would unanimously fight against their enemies, and persecute the Christians as enemies to the gods; which the Thebæan legion no sooner understood, but they presently withdrew to Agaunum, (a place eight miles off, called at this day St. Maurits, from Mauricius the commander of the legion; a place equally pleasant and strong, being encompassed about with craggy and inaccessible rocks,) to avoid, if it might be, the wicked and sacrilegious command, and to refresh themselves, tired with so long a march. But the emperor taking notice of the army as they came to swear, quickly missed the legion, and being angry, sent officers to them, to require them forthwith to do it; who, inquiring what it was that they were commanded to do, were told by the messengers, that all the soldiers had offered sacrifices, and had taken the forementioned oath, and that Cæsar commanded them to return presently and do the like. To whom the heads of the legion mildly answered, that for this reason they left Octodurus, because they had heard they should be forced to sacrifice; that being Christians, and that they might not be defiled with the altars of devils, they thought themselves obliged to worship the living God, and to keep that religion which they had entertained in the East to the last hour of their life: that, as they were a legion, they were ready to any service of the war; but to return to him to commit sacrilege as he commanded, they could not yield.

With this answer the messengers returned and told the emperor, that they were resolved not to obey his commands; who being transported with anger, began thus to vent his passion: "Do my soldiers think thus to slight my royal orders, and the holy rites of my religion? Had they only despised the imperial majesty, it would have called for public vengeance; but, together with the contempt of me, an affront is offered to heaven, and the Roman religion is as much despised as I am. Let the obstinate soldiers know, that I am not only able to vindicate myself, but to revenge the quarrel of my gods. Let my faithful servants make haste, and despatch every tenth man, according as the fatal lot shall fall upon him. By this equal death, let those whose lot it shall be to die first know, how able Maximian is severely to revenge both himself and his gods." With that the command is given, the executioners sent, the emperor's pleasure is made

known, and every tenth man is put to death, who cheerfully offered their necks to the executioners; and the only contention amongst them was, who should first undergo that glorious death. This done, the legion is commanded to return to the rest of the army; whereupon Mauricius, the general of the legion, calling it a little aside, thus bespake them: "I congratulate (most excellent fellow-soldiers) your courage and valour, that for the love of religion, the command of Cæsar has made no impression upon you; you have seen your fellow-soldiers, with minds full of joy, undergoing a glorious death; how much afraid was I, lest, being armed, (and how easy is it for such to do so,) you should, under a pretence of defending them, have endeavoured to hinder their happy funerals. See, I am encompassed round with the bodies of my fellow-soldiers, whom the dismal executioner has torn from my side. I am besprinkled with the blood of the saints, my clothes dyed with the relics of their sacred blood; and shall I doubt to follow their death, whose example I so much congratulate and admire? Shall I concern myself to think what the emperor commands, who is equally subject to the same law of mortality with myself?—I remember we once took this military oath, that with the utmost hazard of our lives we would defend the commonwealth; this we then engaged to the emperors, though no heavenly kingdom was promised to us: and if we could promise this out of devotion to a military service, what then is to be done when Christ promises so much to them that engage with him? Let us willingly expose our lives to this most precious death; let us shew a masculine courage, and an unviolated faith. Methinks I see those blessed souls standing before Christ's tribunal, whom the emperor's officer just now banished out of their bodies; that is the true glory which will recompense the shortness of this life with a blessed eternity. Let us, by the messengers, unanimously return this answer to the emperor: 'We acknowledge, Cæsar, that we are your soldiers, and took up arms for the defence of the empire; nor did we ever basely betray our trust, or forsake our station, or deserve that the brand either of fear or cowardice should be set upon us; nor should we stick now to obey your commands, did not the laws of Christianity, wherein we have been instructed, forbid us to worship devils, and to approach the polluted altars of the gods. We understand you are resolved either to defile us with sacrilegious worship, or to terrify us with

a decimation: spare any further search concerning us; know we are all Christians, our bodies we yield subject to your power, but our souls we reserve entire for Christ, the Author and the Saviour of them.'"

This was no sooner spoken, and universally agreed to by the legion, but it was carried to the emperor, who, exasperated with such a generous resolution, commanded a second decimation, which was immediately executed, and the rest, as before, commanded to return to Octodurus; hereupon Exuperius, the ensign, catching up his colours, thus addressed himself to them; "You see me (most excellent fellow-soldiers) holding these ensigns of secular warfare; but these are not the arms that I call you to, these are not the wars to which I excite your courage and valour: it is another kind of fighting that we are to choose. They are not these swords that must make our way into the heavenly kingdom: we stand in need of an undaunted mind, and invincible defence; a maintaining the faith which we have given to God, to the very last.—Let the dismal executioner go and carry this message to his bloody master, and tell him thus: 'We are, O emperor, your soldiers, but withal, (which we freely confess,) the servants of God. To you we owe military service, to him innocency; from you we have received wages for our labours, from him we had our very lives and beings: we cannot herein obey the emperor, so as to deny God, the Author of our lives; yea, and of yours, too, whether you will or no. Nor is it, sir, any despair (which is always stoutest in greatest straits) that makes us thus resolute against you: we have (you see) arms, and yet make no resistance, choosing rather to die than to overcome, and desirous rather to perish innocent, than to live rebellious and revengeful. If you have a mind to appoint us to any greater and severer torments, we are ready for them. Christians we are, and therefore cannot persecute those that are so. You must needs acknowledge the unconquerable courage of this legion: we throw down our arms; your officer will find our right hands naked, but our breast armed with a true catholic faith. Kill us, and trample on us; we undauntedly yield our necks to the executioner's sword: these things are the more pleasant to us; while setting light by your sacrilegious attempts, we hasten apace to the heavenly crown.'"

Maximianus being told this, and despairing now to break their

constancy, commands his whole army to fall upon them, and cut them off; which they did accordingly, without any difference of age or person, mangling their bodies, and then taking the spoils; the emperor having so appointed, that whoever killed any of the legion, should have the spoils of him whom he killed. And thus they died with their swords in their hands, when they might have preserved their lives (especially in a place so advantageous) by force of arms; or, to be sure, have sold them at the dearest rate. This story I have been willing to set down the more at large, because so remarkable in all its circumstances, and containing the most unparalleled instance of Christian piety and submission (next to that of our blessed Saviour) that, I think, was ever known in the world.

This is the account of those noble martyrs: only to prevent mistakes, we are to take notice, that there was another Mauritius commander of a legion in the East, (mentioned in the Greek Menologies,[t]) who, together with seventy of his soldiers, were condemned by, and suffered under this self-same emperor Maximianus, for refusing to do sacrifice; their martyrdom being recorded by Simeon Metaphrastes,[u] but the account quite different both as to persons and things from that which is here related.

By what has been said, we may see the injustice of that charge which the heathens sometimes laid upon the Christians, that they were disturbers of the peace, and enemies to civil government: an indictment so purely false, and without any shadow of a real pretence to cover it, that the ingenious heathen in Minutius Felix (though raking up all the calumnies he could find, and putting the deepest dye upon every charge which wit and eloquence could put upon it, yet) had not the face so much as once to mention it. But, however, as groundless as it was, they were frequently charged with it. Sometimes they were accused of disloyalty and treason, either because they would not swear by the emperor's genius, or not sacrifice for his safety, or not worship the emperors as *divi*, or gods, or not celebrate their festivals in the same way with others. For the first, their refusing to swear by the emperor's genius, we have heard before what Tertullian answers to it, that it was in effect to give divine honour to devils. To the second, their not sacrificing for the

[t] Menol. Gr. ἐν ἡμερ. κϛ'. Ἰοῦ sub lit. λ'.

[u] Apud Sur. ad diem 18 Jul.

emperor's safety, he answers,[x] that none sacrificed to so good purpose as they, for that they offered up prayers to the true, living, and eternal God, for the safety of the emperors; that God, whom the emperors themselves did, above all others, desire should be propitious and favourable to them, as from whom they knew they derived their government. For the third, their refusing to own the emperors for gods, he tells them,[y] they could not do it, partly because they would not lie in saying so, partly because they durst not, by doing it, mock and deride the emperor; nay, that he himself would not be willing to be styled God, if he remembered that he was a man, it being man's interest to yield to God; that the title of emperor was great enough, and that he could not be called God, without being denied to be emperor; that he was therefore great, because less than heaven;[z] and that if he would needs be a deity, he must first conquer heaven, lead God in triumph, set guards in heaven, and impose tribute upon that place. For the last, their not observing the solemn festivals of the emperors,[a] for which they were accounted enemies to the public, they pleaded that their religion and their conscience could not comply with that vanity, that luxury, and debauchery, and all manner of excess and wickedness that was committed at those times; that the public joy was expressed by that which was a public disgrace, and those things accounted honourable upon the solemn days of emperors, which were unfit and uncomely to be done upon any days; and that there was little reason that they should be accused for not observing that, where looseness of manners was accounted loyalty, and the occasion of luxury a part of religion.

Otherwhiles they were accused of sedition, and holding unlawful combinations, which arose upon the account of their religious assemblies, which their enemies beheld as societies erected contrary to the Roman laws. That we may the better apprehend what these societies were, (in the number whereof they reckoned the Christian meetings,) and how condemned by the Roman laws, we are to know, that in the infancy of the Roman commonwealth, Numa Pompilius,[b] to take away the difference between the Sabines and the Romans, divided the people into colleges and little corporations, (answerable to which are our

[x] Apol. c. 30. [y] Ibid. c. 33. Vid. Theoph. Antioch. ad Autolyc. l. i. s. 11.
[z] Apol. c. 30. [a] Ibid. c. 35. [b] Plut. in vit. Num. p. 71.

city companies,) according to their several trades and occupations, goldsmiths, dyers, potters, curriers, &c., which, together with the city, increased to a great number; (Panciroll,[c] out of both codes gives us an account of thirty-six,) to these he assigned their several halls, times of meeting, and sacred rites, and such immunities as were most proper for them. But besides these appointed by law, several colleges in imitation of them were erected in most parts of the empire, partly for the more convenient despatch of business, but principally for the maintenance of mutual love and friendship. All these societies had their solemn meetings, and customary feasts, which in time degenerated into great excess and luxury; insomuch that Varro,[d] in his time, complained, that the excess and prodigality of their suppers made provisions dear: and much more reason had Tertullian[e] to complain of it in his time. Answerable to these colleges amongst the Romans, were the ἑταιρίαι, or societies amongst the Grecians, who also had their stated and common feasts, such were the ἀνδρεῖα, amongst the Cretians, the συσσίτια at Lacedæmon, and so in other states of Greece. But these meetings, (those of them especially that were not settled either by the decree of the senate, or the constitution of the prince,) partly by reason of their number, and the great confluence to them, partly by reason of their luxurious feasting, began to be looked upon by the state with a jealous eye, especially after that the commonwealth was turned into a monarchy, the emperors beholding them as fit nurseries to plant and breed up treasonable and rebellious designs, and therefore frequently forbade them under very severe penalties.[f] Thus Julius Cæsar,[g] who first laid the foundation of the empire, reduced these colleges to the ancient standard, putting down all that were supernumerary and illegal; wherein he was also followed by his successor Augustus; and the succeeding emperors very often put out strict edicts against them, prohibiting them as dangerous and unlawful combinations.

Under the notions of these societies it was, that the Christian congregations came to be forbidden; several persons confederated

[c] Append. ad Notit. Imper. fo. 197.
[d] Var. apud Jac. Gothofr. in Cod. Theodos. l. xvi. tit. x. l. 20.
[e] Apol. c. 39.
[f] Vid. l. 47. ff. tit. xxii. de colleg. et corporib.
[g] Sueton. in vit. Jul. Cæs. c. 42. in Aug. c. 32. p. 155.

into a combination, and constantly meeting at a common feast rendering them suspicious to their enemies. Hence Pliny,[h] giving the emperor an account of the Christians, and especially of their assembling at their solemn feasts of love, tells him, that they had forborne ever since, according to his command, he had published an edict to forbid the *heteriæ*, or societies. And indeed the Christian assemblies, whereat they usually had the Lord's supper, and their love-feasts looking somewhat like those illegal meetings, (especially as beheld with the eye of an enemy,) it was the less wonder, if the heathens accused them of hatching treason, and the magistrates proceeded against them as contemners and violators of the law.

But to this the Christians answered,[i] that their meetings could not be accounted amongst the unlawful factions, having nothing common with them; that indeed the wisdom and providence of the state had justly prohibited such factions, to prevent seditions, which might thence easily overrun and disquiet all councils, courts, pleadings, and all meetings whatsoever. But no such thing could be suspected of the Christian assemblies, who were frozen as to any ambitious designs of honour or dignity, strangers to nothing more than public affairs, and had renounced all pretences to external pomps and pleasures: that if the Christian assemblies were like others, there would be some reason to condemn them under the notion of factions;[j] but to whose prejudice (say they) did we ever meet together? We are the same when together, that we are when asunder; the same united, as is every single person, hurting no man, grieving no man; and therefore that when such honest, good, pious, and chaste men met together, it was rather to be called a council than a faction. To which Origen adds,[k] that seeing in all their meetings they sought nothing but truth, they could not be said to conspire against the laws, seeing they designed nothing but to get from under the power and tyranny of the devil; who had procured those laws only to establish his empire faster in the world. For elsewhere he bids Celsus,[l] or any of his party, shew any thing that was seditious amongst the Christians: that their religion arose not at first (as he falsely charged it) out of sedition, might appear, in that their Legislator had so severely forbidden killing

[h] Lib. x. ep. 97.
[i] Tert. Apol. c. 38.
[j] Ibid. c. 39.
[k] Cont. Cels. l. i. s. 8.
[l] Lib. iii. s. 7.

and murder, and that the Christians would never have entertained such mild laws, as gave their enemies opportunities to kill them like sheep delivered to the slaughter, without making the least resistance. Thus Arnobius[m] confidently challenges the heathens, whether they could reject Christianity upon the account of its raising wars, tumults, and seditions in the world. No, those were things which they may find nearer home. "You defame us (says Tertullian[n]) with treason against the emperor, and yet never could any Albinians, Nigrians, or Cassians (persons that had mutinied and rebelled against the emperors) be found amongst the Christians; they are those that swear by the emperor's *genii*, that have offered sacrifices for their safety, that have often condemned Christians; these are the men that are found traitors to the emperors. A Christian is no man's enemy, much less his prince's; knowing him to be constituted by God, he cannot but love, revere, and honour him, and desire that he and the whole Roman empire may be safe, as long as the world lasts. We worship the emperor, as much as is either lawful or expedient, as one that is next to God; we sacrifice for his safety, but it is to his and our God; and so as he has commanded, only by holy prayer: for the great God needs no blood or sweet perfumes; these are the banquets and repast of devils, which we do not only reject, but expel at every turn." But to say more concerning this, were to light a candle to the sun. Julian[o] the emperor (though no good friend to Christians, yet) thus far does them right, that if they see any one mutinying against his prince, they presently punish him with great severities.

And here we may with just reason reflect upon the iniquity of the church of Rome, which, in this instance of religion, has so abominably debauched the purity and simplicity of the Christian faith. For they not only exempt the clergy (where they can) from the authority and judgment of the secular powers, whereby horrible enormities do arise, but generally teach, that, a prince once excommunicate, his subjects are absolved from all fealty and allegiance, and he may with impunity be deposed or made away. How shall such a prince be thundered against with curses and deprivations, every bold and treacherous priest be authorized to brand his sacred person with the odious names of infidel,

[m] Adv. Gent. l. ii. p. 20.

[n] Ad Scap. c. 2.

[o] Julian. fragm. Ep. Oper. c. l. p. 528.

heretic, and apostate, and be apostolically licensed to slander and belibel him, and furnished with commissions to free his subjects from their duty and allegiance, and to allure them to take up arms against him? And if these courses fail, and men still continue loyal, they have disciples ready, by secret or sudden arts, to send him out of the world. And if any man's conscience be so nice as to boggle at it, his scruples shall be removed, at worst it shall pass for a venial crime, and the pope, perhaps, (with the help of a limitation that it be done for the interest of the catholic cause,) by his omnipotence, shall create it meritorious.

Cardinal Bellarmine[p] (whose wit and learning were employed to uphold a tottering cause) maintains it stiffly, and in express terms, that if a king be an heretic or an infidel, (and we know what they mean by that, nay, he particularly names the reformed princes of England amongst his instances,) and seeks to draw his dominions unto his sect, it is not only lawful, but necessary, to deprive him of his kingdom. And although he knew that the whole course of antiquity would fly in the face of so bold an assertion, yet he goes on to assert, that the reason why the primitive Christians did not attempt this upon Nero, Dioclesian, Julian the Apostate, and the like, was not out of conscience, or that they boggled out of a sense of duty, but because they wanted means and power to effect it. A bold piece of falsehood this: and how contrary to the plain and positive laws of Christ, to the meek and primitive spirit of the gospel! But, by the cardinal's leave, it could not be for want of power; for if (as Seneca observes[q]) he may be master of any man's life that undervalues his own, it was then as easy for a Christian to have slain Nero or Dioclesian, as it was, of later times, for Gerard to pistol the prince of Orange, or Ravillac to stab the king of France. Nay, take one of his own instances, Julian the Apostate, a prince bad enough, and that left no method unattempted to seduce his subjects to paganism and idolatry, yet though the greatest part of his army were Christians, they never so much as whispered a treasonable design against him, using no other arms (as we noted out of Nazianzen) but prayers and tears. Had St. Paul been of their mind, he would have told the Christian Romans quite another story, and instead of bidding them be subject to Nero, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake, would have in-

[p] De Rom. Pont. l. v. c. 7. [q] Epist. iv.

structed them to take all opportunities to have murdered or deposed him. But I shall not reckon up the villanies they have been guilty of in this kind, nor pursue the odious and pernicious consequences of their doctrine and practice. Thus much I could not but take notice of, being so immediately opposite to the whole tenor of the gospel, and so great a scandal to Christianity: and I verily believe, that had the primitive Christians been no better subjects than their emperors were princes, had they practised on them those bloody artifices which have been common amongst those that call themselves the only catholics, that barbarous dealing would have been a greater curb to the flourishing of the gospel, than all the ten persecutions. For how could an impartial heathen ever have believed their doctrine to have been of God, had their actions been so contrary to all principles of natural divinity? Sure I am, pagan Rome was in this case more orthodox, and their *pontifices* far better doctors of divinity. Their *lex Julia* (as Ulpian,[r] their great lawyer, tells us) allotted the same penalty to sacrilege and treason; placing the one the very next step to the other; thereby teaching us, that they looked upon treason against the prince as an affront next to that which was immediately done against the majesty of heaven. And Marcellus, the great statesman in Tacitus,[s] lays it down for a maxim, "that subjects may wish for good princes, but ought to bear with any." And shame it is, that any should call themselves Christians, and yet be found worse than they, their principles and practices more opposite to the known laws of God and nature, more destructive to the peace and welfare of mankind.

CHAPTER V.

OF THEIR PENANCE, AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

This why last treated of. The church, as a society founded by Christ, has its distinct laws and privileges. What the usual offences that came under the church's discipline. All immorality open or confessed. Lapsing into idolatry the great sin of those times. How many ways usually committed. The *traditores*, who, and their crime. What penalties inflicted upon delinquent persons. Delivering over to Satan, what. This

[r] Lib. vii. de Offic. Procons. in. l. i. ff. ad leg. Jul. maj. [s] Hist. l. iv. c. 8.

extraordinary coercive power, why vested in the church. The common and standing penalty by excommunication. This practised among the ancient Gauls. An account of it out of Cæsar. In use amongst the Jews. Thence derived to the Christians. This punishment, how expressed by church writers. Managed according to the nature of the fault. The rigour of it sometimes mitigated. Delinquent clergymen degraded, and never admitted but to lay-communion. Instances of it. An account of the rise of Novatianism, and the severity of its principles. Styled *Cathari*. Condemned by the synod at Rome. Offenders, in what manner dealt with. The procedure of the action described by Tertullian. Penitents, how behaving themselves during their suspension. The greatest not spared. The case of Philippus and Theodosius. This severity why used. Penances called satisfactions, and why. The use of the word "satisfaction" in the ancient fathers. Penitents, how absolved. After what time. In the power of bishops to extend or shorten these penitentiary humiliations. Four particular cases observed, wherein the time of penance might be shortened. In what sense communion is denied by some ancient canons to penitents at the hour of death. This discipline administered primarily by bishops. By his leave, presbyters and (in necessity) deacons might absolve. The public penitentiary, when and why instituted; when and why laid aside. Penitents taken into communion by martyrs and confessors. This power abused to excess. Cyprian's complaint of the excessive number of libels of peace granted by the martyrs to the lapsed without the knowledge of the bishop. The form of these pacific libels exemplified out of Cyprian. Other sorts of libels. The *libellatici*, who. *Thurificati*. Several sorts of *libellatici*. The *libellatici* properly so called. Their manner of address to the heathen magistrate to procure their exemption from sacrificing. That they did not privately deny Christ, proved against Baronius. The piety and purity of the primitive church, matter of just admiration.

HAVING travelled through the several stages of the subject I had undertaken, I should here have ended my journey, but that there is one thing yet remains, which was not properly reducible under any particular head, being of a general relation to the whole; and that is, to consider what discipline was used towards offenders in the ancient church: only premising this, that the Christian church being founded and established by Christ as a society and corporation, distinct from that of the commonwealth, is, by the very nature of its constitution, (besides what positive ground and warrant there may be for it in scripture,) invested with an inherent power (besides what is borrowed from the civil magistrate) of censuring and punishing its members that offend against the laws of it, and this in order to the maintaining its peace and purity: for without such a fundamental power as this, it is impossible that, as a society, it should be able to subsist, the very nature of a community necessarily implying such a right inherent in it. Now for the better understanding what this power was, and how exercised in the first ages of the church, we shall consider these four things; what were the usual crimes

that came under the discipline of the ancient church; what penalties were inflicted upon delinquent persons; in what manner offenders were dealt with; and by whom this discipline was administered.

First, what the usual crimes and offences were which came under the discipline of the ancient church. In the general, they were any offences against the Christian law, any vice or immorality that was either public in itself, or made known, and made good to the church. For the holy and good Christians of those times were infinitely careful to keep the honour of their religion unspotted, to stifle every sin in its birth, and by bringing offenders to public shame and penalty, to keep them from propagating the malignant influence of a bad example. For this reason they watched over one another, told them privately of their faults and failures, and (when that would not do) brought them before the cognizance of the church. It is needless to reckon up particular crimes, when none were spared. Only because, in those days, (by reason of the violent heats of persecution,) the great temptation which the weaker and more unsettled Christians were exposed to, was to deny their profession, and to offer sacrifice to the heathen gods; therefore lapsing into idolatry was the most common sin that came before them, and of this they had very frequent instances, it being that which, for some ages, mainly exercised the discipline of the church. This sin of idolatry, or denying Christ, in those times was usually committed these three ways: sometimes by exposing the scriptures to the rage and malice of their enemies, which was accounted a virtual renouncing Christianity. This was especially remarkable under the Dioclesian persecution in the African churches. For Dioclesian had put forth an edict, that Christians should deliver up their scriptures and the writings of the church to be burnt. This command was prosecuted with great rigour and fierceness; and many Christians, to avoid the storm, delivered up their Bibles to the scorn and fury of their enemies. Hence they were styled *traditores*, (of whom there is frequent mention in Optatus and St. Augustine,) with whom the orthodox refusing to join, after the persecution was over, the difference broke out into schism and faction, and gave birth to that unhappy sect of the Donatists, which so much exercised the Christian church. Otherwhiles Christians became guilty of idolatry by actual sacrificing,

or worshipping idols; these were called *thurificati*, from their burning incense upon the altars of the heathen deities, and were the grossest and vilest sort of idolaters. Others again fell into this sin by basely corrupting the heathen magistrate, and purchasing a warrant of security from him, to exempt them from the penalty of the law, and the necessity of sacrificing and denying Christ: these were called *libellatici*, of whom we shall speak more afterwards.

Secondly, what penalties and punishments were inflicted upon delinquent persons; and they could be no other than such as were agreeable to the nature and constitution of the church; which as it transacts only in spiritual matters, so it could inflict no other than spiritual censures and chastisements. It is true, indeed, that in the first age especially, the apostles had a power to inflict bodily punishments upon offenders, which they sometimes made use of upon great occasions, as St. Peter did towards Ananias and Sapphira, striking them dead upon the place for their notorious cozenage and gross hypocrisy. And St. Paul punished Elymas with blindness, for his perverse and malicious opposition of the gospel; and this, doubtless, he primarily intends by his "delivering over persons unto Satan;" for no sooner were they excommunicated and cut off from the body of the faithful, but Satan, as the common serjeant and gaoler, seized upon them, and either by actual possessing, or some other sign upon their bodies, made it appear that they were delivered over into his power. This could not but strike a mighty terror into men, and make them stand in awe of the censures of the church; and, questionless, the main design of the Divine Providence in affording this extraordinary gift, was to supply the defect of civil and coercive power, of which the church was then wholly destitute, and therefore needed some more than ordinary assistance, especially at its first constitution, some visible and sensible punishments, to keep its sentence and determinations from being slighted by bold and contumacious offenders. How long this miraculous power lasted in the church I know not, or whether at all beyond the apostles' age. The common and standing penalty they made use of was excommunication, or suspension from communion with the church; the cutting off and casting out an offending person as a rotten and infected member, till by repentance and wholesome discipline he was cured and restored,

and then he was re-admitted into church society, and to a participation of the ordinances and privileges of Christianity.

This way of punishing by excommunication was not originally instituted by our Lord or his apostles, but had been anciently practised both amongst Jews and Gentiles. It was commonly practised by the Druids, (as Cæsar,[t] who lived amongst them, informs us,) who, when any of the people became irregular and disorderly, presently suspended them from their sacrifices; and the persons thus suspended were accounted in the number of the most impious and execrable persons. All men stood off from them, shunned their company and converse as an infection and a plague: they had no benefit of law, nor any honour or respect shewn unto them; and, of all punishments, this they accounted most extreme and severe. So far he, giving an account of this discipline amongst the ancient Gauls. In the Jewish church nothing was more familiar; their three famous degrees of excommunication, נדוי, "niddui," חרם, "cherem," שמתא, "shammatha," are so commonly known, that it were impertinent to insist upon them. From the usage of the Jewish it was, amongst other rites, adopted into the Christian church, practised by the apostles, and the churches founded by them, (whereof we have instances in the New Testament,) but brought to greater perfection in succeeding times: it was variously expressed by the ancient writers, though much to the same purpose. Such persons are said *abstineri*, "to be kept back," a word much used by Cyprian and the synod of Illiberis; ἀφορίζεσθαι, "to be separated," or to be separated from the body of Christ, as St. Augustine oft expresses it; ἐκκόπτεσθαι τῆς κοινωνίας παντάπασιν, "to be wholly cut off from communion," as it is in the Apostolic Canons.[u] Sometimes ῥίπτεσθαι ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, as the Laodicean synod calls it,[x] "to be thrown out of the church;" to be anathematized, and without the communion and pale of the church, as the fathers of the council of Gangra have it.[y]

This suspension, and the penance that accompanied it, was greater or less, longer or shorter, according to the nature of the crime; sometimes two, three, ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty years, and sometimes for the whole life; nay, in some cases it was not taken off at death, but persons were left to the judgment

[t] De Bell. Gall. l. vi. p. 135. [u] Can. 28. [x] Can. 28.

[y] Epist. ad Armen. Episc. præfix. Conc. Gangr.

of God, without any testimony of their reconciliation to the church. Though herein the severity was mitigated, not only by private bishops, but by the great council of Nice, which ordained, that penitent persons should not be denied the communion at the hour of death: of all which cases, or the most material of them, we have in the foregoing discourse produced particular instances in their proper places. If the person offending happened to be in orders, he forfeited his ministry; and though upon his repentance he was restored to communion, yet it was only as a lay-person, never recovering the honour and dignity of his office. Thus Cornelius, bishop of Rome, giving Fabius of Antioch an account of the clancular and schismatical ordination of Novatian,[z] tells him, that one of the bishops that ordained him returned after to the church, with tears bewailing his offence, whom, at the instance of the people, he received into lay communion. The same, Cyprian,[a] writing about this very case, relates of Trophimus, (who was either the very bishop mentioned by Cornelius, or one of his colleagues,) that returning to the church with great demonstrations of repentance, he was readmitted, but no otherwise than in the capacity of a layman: and speaking elsewhere of Basilides's repentance,[b] he tells us, he had no thoughts of retaining his bishopric, making account he was very well dealt with, if upon his repentance he might but communicate as a laic, and be received amongst the number of the faithful. This, St. Basil tells us,[c] was an ancient canon and practice of the church, and accordingly ordains, that a deacon guilty of fornication should be deposed from his office, and being thrust down into the rank of the laity, should in that quality be admitted to communion.

Indeed, they strove by all ways imaginable to discourage sin, never thinking the curb strong enough, so they might but keep persons within the bounds of order and regularity; insomuch, that by some the string was stretched too far, and all pardon denied to them that had sinned. This uncomfortable doctrine was, if not first coined, yet mainly vented by the Novatian party: for Novatus, St. Cyprian's presbyter, being suspended by him for his vile enormities, fled over to Rome, and there

[z] Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 43.

[a] Epist. lv. ad Antonian. p. 105. [b] Epist. lxvii. p. 170.

[c] Epist. Can. ad Amphil. Can. 3. Vid. Zonar. et Balsam. in Can. 10. Conc. Nic.

joined himself to Novatian, a presbyter of that church, (these two names are frequently confounded by the Greek writers,) who ambitiously sought to make himself bishop, and to thrust out Cornelius, newly elected into that see; but not being able to compass his design, between them they started this amongst other heretical opinions,[d] that the lapsed (who through fear of suffering had fallen in the time of persecution) were not to be admitted to repentance, and that though they should never so oft confess their sins, and never so sincerely forsake them, yet there was no hope of salvation for them, at leastwise, (for so I incline to understand them,) that it was not in the power of the church to absolve or give them any hopes of pardon, leaving them to the judgment of God; styling themselves (and not only, as Balsamon affirms,[e] ironically styled by others) by the name of *cathari*, the "pure" and undefiled party. But they were herein presently condemned by a synod of sixty bishops, and more than as many presbyters and deacons, gathered at Rome, (and the decree consented to and published by the rest of the bishops in their several provinces,) concluding, that Novatus and his party, and all that had subscribed to his most inhuman and merciless opinion, should be cast out of the church; and that the brethren who in that sad calamity had fallen from their profession, should be healed and restored by the arts and methods of repentance. Which brings us to consider,

Thirdly, how and in what manner offenders were dealt with, both as to their suspension and penance, and as to their absolution. This affair was usually managed after this order: at their public assemblies, (as we find in Tertullian,[f]) amongst other parts of their holy exercises, there were exhortations, reproofs, and a divine censure; for the judgment is given with great weight, as amongst those that are sure that God beholds what they do; and this is one of the highest *præludiums* and forerunners of the judgment to come, when the delinquent person is banished from the communion of prayers, assemblies, and all holy commerce. By this passage we clearly see, that the first thing in this solemn action, was to make reproofs and exhortations, thereby to bring the offender to the sight and acknowledgment of his faults; then the sentence or censure was passed upon him, whereby he was

[d] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 43. Epiph. Hæres. lix. contra Catharos, s. 1.
[e] In Can. 8. Conc. Nic.
[f] Apol. c. 39.

suspended, not only from the communion of the holy eucharist, but from all holy commerce in any (especially public) duty of religion. We cannot imagine, that in every person that stood under this capacity, a formal sentence was always denounced against him, it being many times sufficient, that the fact he had done was evident and notorious, as in the case of the lapsed that had offered sacrifice; for in this case the offender was looked upon as *ipso facto* excommunicate, and all religious commerce forborne towards him. It is true that, in some cases, the martyrs, (as we shall see more anon,) finding such lapsed persons truly penitent, did receive them into private communion; so did those martyrs Dionysius Alexandrinus speaks of, in his letter to Fabius bishop of Antioch:[g] they took the penitents that had fallen into idolatry into their company, and communicated with them both at prayers and meals; but to public communion they were never admitted till they had exactly fulfilled the discipline of the church, which principally consisted in many severe acts of repentance and mortification, more or less according to the nature of the offence.

During this space of penance, they appeared in all the formalities of sorrow and mourning,[h] in a sordid and squalid habit, with a sad countenance, and a head hung down, with tears in their eyes, standing without at the church doors, (for they were not suffered to enter in,) falling down upon their knees to the ministers as they went in, and begging the prayers of all good Christians for themselves, with all the expressions and demonstrations of a sorrowful and dejected mind, reckoning the lower they lay in repentance, the higher it would exalt them; the more sordid they appeared, the more they should be cleansed and purified; the less they spared themselves, the more God would spare them. At these times also they made open confession of their faults, this being accounted the very spring of repentance, and without which they concluded it could not be real: "out of confession (says Tertullian[i]) is born repentance, and by repentance God is pacified." And therefore without this, neither riches nor honour would procure any admission into the church. Thus Eusebius reports,[k] that when Philippus, the

[g] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 42.

[h] Tert. de pœnit. c. 9. Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 28.

[i] Ibid.

[k] Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 34.

emperor, would have gone in with the rest of the Christians upon Easter-eve, to have partaken of the prayers of the church, the bishop of the place would by no means suffer it, unless he first made confession of his sins, and passed through the order of the penitents, being guilty of very great and enormous sins; which, it is said, he very willingly submitted to, testifying by his actions his real and religious fear of the Divine Majesty. This story, though, as to the main of it, it might be true, yet as fastened upon Philip the emperor I have formerly shewed it to be false, and that it is rather meant of one Philippus, who was governor in Egypt, and professed himself a Christian: but however this was, it is certain that a person as great as he, Theodosius the Great, for his bloody and barbarous slaughter of the Thessalonians, was by St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, suspended, brought to public confession, and forced to undergo a severe course of penance for eight months together; when after great demonstrations of a hearty sorrow and sincere repentance, not more rigidly imposed upon him, than readily and willingly received by him, after his usual prostrations in the church, (as if unworthy either to stand or kneel,) crying out, in the words of David, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word;" after having oft torn his hair, beat his forehead, watered his cheeks with tears, and humbly begged peace and pardon, he was absolved, and restored to communion with the church; of which passage they who would know more may find the story largely related by Theodoret.[l]

This severity was used towards offenders, partly to make them more sensible of their sins, partly to affright and deter others, but principally to give satisfaction both to God and his church concerning the reality and sincerity of their repentance. Hence it is that these penances in the writings of those times are so often called satisfactions; for whenever those fathers use the word, it is either with respect to men or God: if to men, then the meaning is, that by these external acts of sorrow and mortification, they satisfy the church of their repentance,[m] and make reparation for those offences and scandals which they had given by their sins; if to God, then it is taken for the acknowledgment of a man's fault, and the begging of pardon and re-

[l] Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 15.

[m] Aug. Enchirid. c. 65.

mission. Thus Cyprian,[n] speaking of the state of impenitent sinners, aggravates it by this, that they do *peccare, nec satisfacere*, "sin, but make no satisfaction;" i. e. (as in the very next words he explains it,) they do not *peccata deflere*, "confess and bewail their sins." And before, discoursing about God's being the only object of tears and sorrow for sin, which is to be addressed to God and not man, he tells us, it is God that is to be appeased by satisfaction; that he being greatly offended, is to be entreated by a long and full repentance, as being alone able to pardon those sins that are committed against him. So that the satisfaction, which they reckoned they made to God, consisted in seeking to avert his displeasure, and to regain his forfeited favour by a deep contrition and sorrow for sin, by a real acknowledgment and forsaking of their faults, and by an humble giving to God the glory, both of his mercy and his justice. Thence confession is called by Tertullian[o] the counsel or intendment of satisfaction. And a little after he describes it thus: "confession (says he) is that whereby we acknowledge our offence to God, not as if he were ignorant of it, but inasmuch as by confession satisfaction is forwarded, by confession repentance is produced, and by repentance God is appeased." The same, both he, Cyprian, and others, frequently use in the same sense; which I note the rather, because of that absurd and impious doctrine, so current amongst the papists, and which they pretended to derive from these very fathers, that by works of penance compensation is made to God for the debt of punishment that was contracted, whereby at least the temporal penalties due to sin are meritoriously expiated and done away. But this, besides that it is flatly repugnant to the doctrine of antiquity, how much it is derogatory to the honour of divine grace, and the infinite satisfaction of the Son of God, I shall not now stand to dispute. To return, therefore: this term of penance was usually exacted with great rigour, and seldom dispensed with, no indulgence or admission being granted till the full time was completed. Therefore Cyprian[p] smartly chides with some presbyters, who had taken upon them to absolve the lapsed before their time: and that whereas in lesser offences men were obliged to the just time of penance, and to

[n] De laps. p. 135.
[o] Tert. de pœnit. c. 8.
[p] Epist. xvi. ad presb. et diac. p. 36.

observe the order of discipline; they, in a crime of so heinous a nature, had, hand over head, admitted them to communion before they had gone through their penance and confession, and fulfilled the regular customs and orders of the church.

The time of penance being ended,[q] they addressed themselves to the governors of the church for absolution: hereupon their repentance was taken into examination; and being found to be sincere and real, they were openly re-admitted into the church by the imposition of the hands of the clergy, the party to be absolved kneeling down between the knees of the bishop, or, in his absence, of the presbyter, who, laying his hand upon his head, solemnly blessed and absolved him; whence, doubtless, sprang that absurd and senseless calumny which the heathens laid upon the Christians, that they were wont *sacerdotis colere genitalia;* so forward were they to catch at any reproach which the most crooked and malicious invention could insinuate and suggest. The penitent being absolved, was received with the universal joy and acclamation of the people, as one returned from the state of the dead, (for such it is plain they accounted them while under a state of guilt, especially the lapsed, as Cyprian[r] positively affirms them to be,) being embraced by his brethren, who blessed God for his return, and many times wept for the joy of his recovery; who, upon his absolution, was now restored to a participation of the Lord's supper, and to all other acts of church communion, which by his crimes he had forfeited, and from which he had been suspended, till he had given satisfactory evidence of his repentance and purpose to persevere under the exact discipline of Christianity. This was the ordinary way wherein they treated criminals in the primitive church; but in cases of necessity, (such as that of danger of death,) they did not rigidly exact the set time of penance, but absolved the person, that so he might die in the peace and communion of the church.[s] The story of Serapion at Alexandria we have formerly mentioned, who being suddenly surprised with death while he was under the state of penance, and not being able to die till he had received absolution, sent for the presbyter to testify his repentance and absolve him; but he being also at that time sick, sent him a

[q] Cypr. Epist. xv. ad Martyr. p. 34.

[r] Epist. xxxiii. ad laps. p. 66. Vid. Epist. xlix. p. 93.

[s] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 44.

part of the consecrated elements which he had by him; upon the receiving whereof he breathed out his soul with great comfort and satisfaction, that he now died in communion with the church.

The truth is, the time of this penitentiary humiliation often varied according to the circumstances of the case, it being much in the power of the bishops and governors of the church to shorten the time, and sooner to absolve and take them into communion; the medicinal virtue of repentance lying not in the duration, but the manner of it, as St. Basil speaks in this very case.[t] A learned man has observed to my hand four particular cases wherein they were wont to anticipate the usual time of absolution:[u] the first was, (what I observed but now,) when persons were in danger of death; this was agreed to by Cyprian,[v] and the martyrs, and the Roman clergy, and the letters (as he tells us) sent through the whole world to all the churches. This also was provided for by the great council of Nice:[x] that as for those that were at the point of death, the ancient and canonical rule should be observed still; that when any were at the point of death, they should by no means be deprived of the last and necessary *viaticum*, i. e. the holy sacrament, which was the great symbol of communion. And here, for the better understanding some passages, it may not be unuseful once for all to add this note: that whereas many of the ancient canons (of the Illiberine council especially) positively deny communion to some sorts of penitents even at the hour of death, they are not to be understood, as if the church mercilessly denied all indulgence and absolution to any penitent at such a time, but only that it was thought fit to deny them the use of the eucharist, which was the great pledge and testimony of their communion with the church.

The second case was in the time of eminent persecution, conceiving it but fit, at such times, to dispense with the rigour of the discipline, that so penitents being received to the grace of Christ, and to the communion of the church, might be the better armed, and enabled to contend earnestly for the faith. This was resolved and agreed upon by Cyprian[y] and a whole council of African bishops, whereof they give an account to Cornelius, bishop of Rome, that, in regard persecution was drawing on,

[t] Can. 2. ad Amphil.
[u] Forbes. instruct. Hist. Th. l. xii. c. 7.
[v] Epist. lv. ad Antonian. p. 106.
[x] Can. 13.
[y] Epist. lvii. p. 116.

they held it convenient and necessary, that communion and reconciliation should be granted to the lapsed, not only to those that were a dying, but even to the living, that they might not be left naked and unarmed in the time of battle, but be able to defend themselves with the shield of Christ's body and blood. For how (say they) shall we teach and persuade them to shed their blood in the cause of Christ, if we deny them the benefit of his blood? How shall we make them fit to drink the cup of martyrdom, unless we first admit them in the church to a right of communication, to drink of the cup of the blood of Christ? A third case wherein they relaxed the severity of this discipline was, when great multitudes were concerned, or such persons as were likely to draw great numbers after them: in this case they thought it prudent and reasonable to deal with persons by somewhat milder and gentler methods, lest by holding them to terms of rigour and austerity, they should provoke them to fly off either to heathens or to heretics. This course, Cyprian tells us,[z] he took: he complied with the necessity of the times, and, like a wise physician, yielded a little to the humour of the patient, to provide for his health, and to cure his wounds; and quotes herein the example of Cornelius of Rome,[a] who dealt just so with Trophimus and his party: and elsewhere, that out of an earnest desire to regain and resettle the brethren, he was ready to connive at many things, and to forgive any thing, and did not examine and exact the greatest crimes with that full power and severity that he might; insomuch, that he thought he did almost offend himself in an over-liberal remitting other men's offences. Lastly, in absolving penitents, and mitigating the rigours of their repentance, they used to have respect to the person of the penitent, to his dignity, or age, or infirmity, or the course of his past life; sometimes to the greatness of his humility, and the impression which his present condition made upon him. Thus the Ancyran council[b] empowers bishops to examine the manner of men's conversion and repentance; and accordingly, either to moderate or enlarge their time of penance, but especially that regard be had to their conversation both before and since their offence, that so clemency and indulgence may be extended to them. So for the case of persons of more than ordinary rank and dignity, or of a more

[z] Epist. lv. ad Antonian. p. 106.
[a] Ibid. p. 105
[b] Can. 5. Vid. Conc. Nic. Can. 12.

tender and delicate constitution, Chrysostom determines,[c] that in chastising and punishing their offences, they be dealt withal in a more peculiar manner than other men, lest by holding them under over-rigorous penalties they should be tempted to fly out into despair, and so throwing off the reins of modesty, and the care of their own happiness and salvation, should run headlong into all manner of vice and wickedness. So wisely did the prudence and piety of those times deal with offenders, neither letting the reins so loose as to patronize presumption, or encourage any man to sin, nor yet holding them so straight as to drive men into despair.

The fourth and last circumstance concerns the persons by whom this discipline was administered. Now though it is true, that this affair was managed in the public congregation, and seldom or never done without the consent and approbation of the people, (as Cyprian more than once and again expressly tells us,) yet was it ever accounted a ministerial act, and properly belonged to them. Tertullian,[d] speaking of church censures, adds, that the elders that are approved, and have attained that honour, not by purchase but testimony, preside therein. And Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea Cappadocia, in a letter to St. Cyprian,[e] speaking of the *majores natu*, "the seniors that preside in the church," tells us, that to them belongs the power of baptizing, imposing hands, (viz. in penance and ordination.) By the bishop it was primarily and usually administered; the determining the time and manner of repentance, and the conferring pardon upon the penitent sinner, being acts of the highest power and jurisdiction, and therefore reckoned to appertain to the highest order in the church. Therefore it is provided by the Illiberine council,[f] that penance shall be prescribed by none but the bishop; only, in case of necessity, such as sickness and danger of death, by leave and command from the bishop, the presbyter or deacon might impose penance and absolve. Accordingly, we find Cyprian,[g] amongst other directions to his clergy how to carry themselves towards the lapsed, giving them this: that if any were overtaken with sickness or present danger, they should not stay for his coming, but the sick person should make confession of his sins to the next presbyter, or (if a pres-

[c] De sacerdot. l. ii. c. 4. [d] Apol. c. 39. [e] Inter Epist. Cyp. ep. lxxv. p. 221.
[f] Can. 32. [g] Epist. xviii. p. 40. Vid. Conc. 2. Carthag. Can. 4.

byter could not be met with) to a deacon, that so laying hands upon him, he might depart in the peace of the church.

But though while the number of Christians were small, and the bounds of particular churches little, bishops were able to manage these and other parts of their office in their own persons, yet soon after the task began to grow too great for them; and therefore about the time of the Decian persecution, when Christians were very much multiplied, and the number of the lapsed great, it seemed good to the prudence of the church, partly for the ease of the bishop, and partly to provide for the modesty of persons in being brought before the whole church to confess every crime, to appoint a public penitentiary, (some holy, grave, and prudent presbyter,) whose office it was to take the confession of those sins which persons had committed after baptism, and by prayers, fastings, and other exercises of mortification, to prepare them for absolution. He was a kind of *censor morum*, to inquire into the lives of Christians, to take an account of their failures, and to direct and dispose them to repentance. This office continued for some hundreds of years, till it was abrogated by Nectarius, (St. Chrysostom's predecessor in the see of Constantinople,) upon the occasion of a notorious scandal that arose about it. A woman of good rank and quality had been with the penitentiary,[h] and confessed all her sins committed since baptism: he enjoined her to give up herself to fasting and prayer; but not long after she came to him, and confessed, that while she was conversant in the church to attend upon those holy exercises, she had been tempted to commit folly and lewdness with a deacon of the church, whereupon the deacon was immediately cast out; but the people being exceedingly troubled at the scandal, and the holy order hereby exposed to the scorn and derision of the Gentiles, Nectarius, by the advice of Eudæmon, a presbyter of that church, wholly took away the office of the public penitentiary, leaving every one to the care and liberty of his own conscience to prepare himself for the holy sacrament. This account Socrates assures us he had from Eudæmon's own mouth. And Sozomen adds, that almost all bishops followed Nectarius's example in abrogating this office.

But besides the ordinary and standing office of the clergy, we find even some of the laity, the martyrs and confessors, that

[h] Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 19. Confer. Sozom. l. vii. c. 16.

had a considerable hand in absolving penitents, and restoring them to the communion of the church. For the understanding of which we are to know, that as the Christians of those times had a mighty reverence for martyrs and confessors, as the great champions of religion, so the martyrs took upon them to dispense in extraordinary cases; for it was very customary, in times of persecution, for those who through fear of suffering had lapsed into idolatry, to make their address to the martyrs in prison, and to beg peace of them, that they might be restored to the church; who, considering their petitions, and weighing the circumstances of their case, did frequently grant their requests, mitigate their penance, and by a note, signified under their hands, signify what they had done to the bishop, who, taking an account of their condition, absolved and admitted them to communion. Of these *libelli*, or books granted by the martyrs to the lapsed, there is mention in Cyprian[i] at every turn; who complains they were come to that excessive number, that thousands were granted almost every day. This many of them took upon them to do with great smartness and authority, and without that respect that was due to the bishops,[k] as appears from the note written to Cyprian, by Lucian, in the name of the confessors;[l] which, because it is but short, and withal shews the form and manner of those pacific libels, it may not be amiss to set it down; and thus it runs: "All the confessors to Cyprian the bishop greeting. Know that we have granted peace to all those, of whom you have had an account what they have done, how they have behaved themselves since the commission of their crimes; and we would that these presents should be by you imparted to the rest of the bishops. We wish you to maintain peace with the holy martyrs. Written by Lucian of the clergy, the exorcist and reader being present." This was looked upon as very peremptory and magisterial, and therefore of this confidence and presumption, and carelessness in promiscuously granting these letters of peace, Cyprian, not without reason, complains,[m] in an epistle to the clergy of Rome.

Besides these libels granted by the martyrs, there were other *libelli* granted by heathen magistrates, (of which it may not be impertinent to speak a little,) whence the lapsed that had had

[i] Epist. xv. xvii. xviii. et alibi.
[k] Epist. xix. p. 41.
[l] Epist. xxiii. p. 49.
[m] Epist. xxvii. p. 52.

them were commonly called *libellatici*, and they were of several sorts; some writing their names *in libellis*, "in books," and professing themselves to worship Jupiter, Mars, and the rest of the heathen gods, presented them to the magistrate; and these did really sacrifice, and pollute not their souls only, but their hands and their lips with unlawful sacrifices, as the clergy of Rome express it in a letter to St. Cyprian;[n] these were called *thurificati* and *sacrificati*, from their having offered incense and sacrifices. Somewhat of this nature was that libel that Pliny[o] speaks of in his epistle to the emperor Trajan, presented to him while he was proconsul of Bithynia, containing a catalogue of the names of many, some whereof had been accused to be Christians and denied it, others confessed they had been so some years since, but had renounced it; all of them adoring the images of the gods and the emperor's statue, offering sacrifice, and blaspheming Christ; and were accordingly dismissed and released by him. Others there were who did not themselves sign or present any such libels,[p] but some heathen friends for them, (and sometimes out of kindness they were encouraged to it by the magistrates themselves,) and were hereupon released out of prison, and had the favour not to be urged to sacrifice. Nay, Dionysius[q] of Alexandria speaks of some masters, who, to escape themselves, compelled their servants to do sacrifice for them, to whom he appoints a three years' penance for that sinful compliance and dissimulation. A third sort there was, who finding the edge and keenness of their judges was to be taken off with a sum of money, freely confessed to them that they were Christians and could not sacrifice, prayed them to give a libel of dismission, for which they would give them a suitable reward: these were most properly called *libellatici* and *libellati*. Cyprian acquaints us with the manner of their address to the heathen magistrate, bringing in such a person thus speaking for himself: "I had both read, and learned from the sermons of the bishop, that the servant of God is not to sacrifice to idols, nor to worship images; wherefore, that I might not do what was unlawful, having an opportunity of getting a libel offered, (which yet I would not have accepted, had it not offered itself,) I went to the magistrate, or caused

[n] Epist. xxx. p. 57. Ep. lv. ad Antonian. p. 106.
[o] Epist. xcvii. l. x.
[p] Epist. xxx. p. 57.
[q] Can. 7. Synod. vol. ii. par. i. p. 12.

another to go in my name and tell him, that I was a Christian, and that it was not lawful for me to sacrifice, nor to approach the altars of the devils, that therefore I would give him a reward to excuse me, that I might not be urged to what was unlawful." These, though not altogether so bad as the *sacrificati*, yet Cyprian charges as guilty of implicit idolatry, having defiled their consciences with the purchase of these books, and done that by consent which others had actually done.

I know Baronius[r] will needs have it, (and boasts that all that that had written before him were mistaken in the case,) that these *libellatici* were not exempted from denying Christ, nor gave money to that end; that they only requested of the magistrate that they might not be compelled to offer sacrifice, that they were ready to deny Christ, and were willing to give him a reward to dispense with them only so far, and to furnish them with a libel of security, and that they did really deny him before they obtained the libel. But nothing can be more plain, both from this and several other passages in Cyprian, than that they did not either publicly or privately sacrifice to idols, or actually deny Christ; and therefore bribed the magistrate, that they might not be forced to do what was unlawful. And hence Cyprian[s] argues them as guilty by their wills and consent, and that they had implicitly denied Christ: how? by actually doing it? No, but by pretending they had done what others were really guilty of. Certainly the cardinal's mistake arose from a not right understanding the several sorts of the *libellatici*, the first whereof (as we have shewn) did actually sacrifice and deny Christ.

And now having taken this view of the severity of discipline in the ancient church, nothing remains but to admire and imitate their piety and integrity, their infinite hatred of sin, their care and zeal to keep up that strictness and purity of manners that had rendered their religion so renowned and triumphant in the world; a discipline which how happy were it for the Christian world, were it again resettled in its due power and vigour! which particularly is the judgment and desire of our own church concerning the solemn quadragesimal penances and humiliations. "In the primitive church (says the preface to the commination) there was a godly discipline, that at the beginning of Lent such

[r] Annal. Eccl. ad Ann. 253. n. 20, et seqq.

[s] De Laps. p. 134.

persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend: which said discipline it is much to be wished might be restored again."

A

DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE

GOVERNMENT OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH

BY

BISHOPS, METROPOLITANS, AND PATRIARCHS:

MORE PARTICULARLY CONCERNING THE ANCIENT POWER AND JURISDICTION OF THE BISHOPS OF ROME, AND THE ENCROACHMENTS OF THAT UPON OTHER SEES, ESPECIALLY THE SEE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

TO THE READER.

Among the several virtues wherewith the religion of our Lord does at once refine and adorn human nature, there are none conduce more, both to the peace of the world and the quiet of private and particular persons, than humility and contentment; the laying aside the vain and fond opinion of ourselves, a "lowliness of mind to esteem others better than ourselves, in honour preferring one another;" an easiness and satisfaction under that place and portion, which the wisdom of the Divine Providence has thought fit to allot us, and a generous contempt of those little and sordid arts, by which men hunt after power and greatness, and impatiently affect dominion and superiority over others.

A noble and divine temper of mind, which our Lord has effectually recommended both by his doctrine, and the example of his life. He has taught us, that we should not, after the proud and hypocritical manner of the Pharisees, "do our works to be seen of men, make broad our phylacteries and enlarge the borders of our garments, love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogue, and greetings in the markets;"[a] that we should not affect proud titles, and the honour of a name, "to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi, for that one is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren, (not that our Lord here absolutely forbids all honour and precedence, no more than he does all mastership and superiority in what follows, but only an inordinate desire, a vicious and irregular inclination toward these things, and an undue and tyrannical exercise of them;) that we

[a] Matt. xxiii. 5—10. 12.

should call no man our father upon earth," that is, in the same sense, and with the same respect, wherewith we do God,[b] "for that one is our Father which is in heaven; neither that we be called masters, for that one is our Master, even Christ: for that whosoever should exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that should humble himself, shall be exalted."

And then for his own practice, how openly did he protest against "seeking his own glory," or "receiving honour from men?" how studiously did he stifle the fame of his own miracles, and whatever might raise him in the esteem and value of the world? When an appeal was made to him to judge a cause, he rebuked the motion with a "who made me a judge and a ruler over you?" When the Jews were resolved to have made him king, he fled from the very shadow of a crown. When there was a strife amongst his own apostles, which of them should be accounted the greatest, like the kings of the Gentiles, which exercised lordship and authority over their subjects, he ended the controversy with a short decision, "but ye shall not be so."

This charge St Peter[c] particularly applies to the bishops and rulers of the church, that they should not "be lords over God's heritage;" that "the younger should submit themselves to the elder; yea, all of them be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for that God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

Had the excellent rules here laid down by St. Peter been observed by those who pretend to be his successors, the Christian world had been free from those infinite disturbances and distractions which the pride and ambition of the Roman bishops have brought upon it. For certainly, among all the corruptions and innovations of that church, nothing is more palpable and notorious, than an intolerable usurpation over the rights of their brethren; nothing more wild and extravagant, than the challenging a supremacy over the Christian church, as affixed to the see

[b] Chrysost. in loc.

[c] 1 Pet. v. 3. 5.

of Rome, expressly contrary, not only to the scripture, the great canon of our faith, but to the laws of all ancient councils, and the practice of the church; which however it allowed a primary honour and respect to the Roman prelate, yet still set him out, as it did to all other bishops, the particular extent of his jurisdiction.

This is that which I have endeavoured to evince in the following discourse, wherein I have traced the papal authority to those proper bounds and limits within which it was confined of old. And upon that occasion have briefly surveyed the frame and constitution of the ancient church, and that policy and government whereby it was managed in its purer and better times.

That which gave birth to the whole discourse was this: I had elsewhere,[d] in relating the acts of the second general council, represented the third canon of that council, which decreed, that "the bishop of Constantinople, upon the account of its being New Rome, or the imperial city, should have the privilege of honour next to the bishop of Rome." A canon which they of Rome could never pardon, as which limits the power of the Roman prelate, and declares the foundation upon which it stands. For the illustration of this canon, I intended in that place to have added a digression concerning the ancient power and precedence of the bishops of Rome; but, upon second thoughts, referred it to an appendix at the end of the book. But that book swelling into too great a bulk, and this discourse being grown beyond the proportion that was at first designed, I was over-persuaded by some friends to venture it abroad alone. A thing which had I intended from the beginning, it had come forth, at least in some parts, more perfect than it is, and with some advantages which now it is forced to go without.

I have wholly waived all debates concerning the *jus divinum* of episcopacy, and the controversies that depend upon it, (enough has been said upon that argument,) and have chiefly insisted

[d] Life of St. Greg. Naz. sect. v. n. 9.

upon those branches of the ecclesiastic government, which have been less canvassed amongst us.

For the same reason, I have more lightly touched upon the pope's universal supremacy; it was his metropolitical and patriarchal power I principally designed to inquire into. I know volumes have been written *de primatu papæ*, *de ecclesiis suburbicariis*, &c., and therefore I have reduced what concerns those matters into as narrow a compass as I could, and have said no more than what is necessary to clear the argument, and express my own sense about it.

If what is here said shall administer any light to this part of church antiquity, I shall be very glad; if not, I am content it should follow the fate of many much better books, to be thrown aside. It was never designed to instruct the learned, but only to form a short scheme of the true state of things, for the benefit of those who have not been much conversant in the antiquities of the church; at least, to give some aid and direction to the younger sort, who first apply themselves to the study of those ancient times. And if it may but attain this end, I shall think my time and pains have been well bestowed.

A

DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE

GOVERNMENT OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH

BY

BISHOPS, METROPOLITANS, AND PATRIARCHS.

CHAPTER I.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH-GOVERNMENT, AND POWER OF THE ROMAN BISHOPS TILL THE COUNCIL OF NICE.

An equality among the apostles as church governors appointed by Christ. Peter's pretended supremacy over the rest shewed to be vain and groundless. If any such had been granted, it belonged not to the Roman bishops. Early appearances of the pride and usurpation of the bishops of that church. Special advantages of that see to set up for tyranny and usurpation. The foundation of that church by two great apostles, Peter and Paul. Rome the seat of the empire. The honour and advantages of that church thereby. The catholic faith long time preserved entire in the church of Rome. Its large revenues affording liberal hospitality. Its sending forth emissaries to plant Christianity in other countries, and thereby claiming superiority over them. The pride of that church severely censured by St. Basil. A general scheme of the subordination in the government of the primitive church, by bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs, and the conformity herein to the civil state. Episcopal government, how it spreads itself at first. Metropolitans introduced, and why. A brief account of the ancient way of ecclesiastical administration out of Cyprian and others, by the bishop and his clergy, by provincial synods. What things usually managed there. Foreign churches, how mutually transacting with one another. The bishops of Rome had no more authority in this period than the bishops of other greater sees. Pope Melchiades appointed commissioner by Constantine. Donatus appeals from his judgment. His sentence brought under examinations in the synod of Arles.

Order and government are so essentially necessary to the peace and welfare of mankind, that no society, whether civil or sacred,

can subsist without it: where there is none to command, there will be none to obey; and where every one is left to do what he please, there must be confusion and every evil work. No sooner, therefore, had our blessed Saviour laid the foundation of the Christian church, but he chose twelve, whom he named apostles, to whose care and conduct he committed the administration of it. These he invested with equal powers, upon these he derived the same mission which he himself had received from God: "As my Father sent me, so send I you."[a] All had the same authority to preach, plant, and propagate the church, to "feed and rule the flock of Christ," to "go teach and baptize all nations;" the same "keys of the kingdom of heaven" committed to one as well as another, that "whosesoever sins they should remit, they should be remitted, and whosesoever sins they retain, they should be retained:" the same Holy Spirit breathed upon all, with a "receive ye the Holy Ghost." Notwithstanding all which, it is confidently pretended on the behalf of St. Peter, that a paramount authority was conferred upon him, and that not only above, but over the rest; that he was constituted by our Lord, prince and head of the college; the other apostles were indeed shepherds of the flock, but were themselves Christ's sheep, and St. Peter appointed pastor over them; with a great deal more, boldly asserted at a venture, and attempted to be made good by such warrant from scripture, as any thing but the necessity of maintaining a desperate cause would be ashamed to produce. And as no such charter can be produced, signed by our Saviour, so neither do we find St. Peter challenging, much less exercising any such superiority. He submitted to the orders of the apostolical college, and rendered himself accountable to them for his actions; styles himself no more than their fellow-presbyter, and cautions against "lording over God's heritage."[b] How openly did St. Paul assert,[c] that he "came not a whit behind τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, the very chiefest apostles?" and that[d] "the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto him, as well as that of the circumcision was to Peter?" James and John are said[e] to be pillars, as well as he: nay, the whole twelve apostles are equally styled[f] the "twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem, that descended out of heaven;"

[a] John xx. 21. [b] 1 Pet. v. 1—3. [c] 2 Cor. xi. 5.
[d] Gal. ii. 7. [e] Gal. ii. 9. [f] Rev. xxi. 14.

and it was indifferently promised to all,[g] that "they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Nay, when a strife arose amongst them, which of them should be greatest in his kingdom, our Lord, on purpose to silence all such ambitious attempts for the future, plainly told them,[h] that though "the kings of the Gentiles exercised dominion over their subjects, and they that are great exercised authority upon them, yet ye shall not be so; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

II. And yet, after all, should it be granted, that our Lord gave St. Peter some kind of superior power over the rest, yet what is this to the bishops of Rome? unless it could be proved that those privileges were to be hereditary, and were not to determine and expire with St. Peter's person. Bellarmine pleads,[i] that it is founded in a right of succession, and this right settled *jure divino*, and by our Lord's own institution, who expressly commanded St. Peter to fix the apostolical seat at Rome. The proofs he brings to make good this command, are a passage out of an apocryphal epistle of pope Marcellus, long since discarded together with the rest, as the most notorious cheat and imposture that ever was put upon the Christian church; and, at best, an uncertain story of our Lord's appearing to Peter, and that too nothing to his purpose. And, therefore, not daring to trust to them, he fairly quits the *jus divinum*,[k] and confesses that the pontifical succession has no foundation in scripture: however, that it is not improbable, and that it is a thing piously to be believed; that is, perhaps it may be so, and perhaps not; we may do well to believe it, but there is no certain ground for it: an admirable foundation to build so important a claim upon, and for the sake whereof they have now for many ages created so much trouble and disturbance to the Christian world. And besides, there is a πρῶτον ψεῦδος, in this case, lies at the bottom, it being generally taken for granted, that St. Peter was, in a proper sense, bishop of Rome, which yet I believe can never be made good. That he constituted that church, and laid down his life there for the confirmation of it, I easily grant; but this makes him not properly bishop of it, and consequently the popes

[g] Matt. xix. 28.
[h] Matt. xx. 25—27.
[i] De Rom. Pontif. l. ii. c. 1. et 12. l. iv. c. 4.
[k] Ibid. l. ii. c. 12. l. iv. c. 4.

cannot properly be his successors. Die he might there, but how comes this to entitle the bishops of Rome to the succession? If so, then (as a learned man,[1] of the Greek church, long since urged in this case) because our Lord died at Jerusalem, therefore the bishop of Jerusalem, as possessing the seat of our great High-priest, may claim an universal superiority, and challenge to be as much greater than the bishop of Rome, as Christ is than Peter. Once more: let it be supposed that this supremacy was entailed not only upon St. Peter, but upon his successors; how comes it to pass that it was not lodged in the see of Antioch, where they grant St. Peter resided, as bishop, several years before he went to Rome, and which therefore, in all reason, ought to challenge a primary title? An objection which Bellarmine, with all the subtilties of his wit and learning, is not able to claw off: so many insuperable bars are there lying in the way to this sovereign and unaccountable authority of their church.

III. But what power soever the bishops of Rome may pretend to derive from St. Peter, sure I am they thus far inherit too much of his spirit and temper; that θερμότης, I mean that rash and busy fervour and eagerness, so frequently noted in him by the ancients: forward, like him, to speak, run, and interpose at every turn; and forward, like him, too, to smite with the sword, when meeting with the least opposition. No sooner were the heats of the fifth persecution somewhat cooled, and the church entered a little upon more calm and prosperous days, but we find pope Victor, anno 196, picking a quarrel with some of the Eastern churches about the time of celebrating Easter; and though they justified themselves to the Christian world by apostolical practice, and a constant uninterrupted observation ever since, yet because refusing to comply with the custom of the church of Rome, he hastily threw them under excommunication, to the great disturbance and amazement of the Christian world: for which he was severely rebuked by the wise and good men of that time, especially the mild and peaceable Irenæus. It was not much above half an age after this, when the practice of baptizing anew those who had been baptized by heretics, begun mightily to prevail in some parts of the East, but especially in the African churches. Stephen, who was then bishop of Rome, stormed hereat, and, in a great rage, publicly declared,

[1] Barlaam περὶ τῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἀρχῆς. κεφ. γ'. p. 25. edit. Græc.

that he would hold no communion with them; and when, according to the custom whereby churches mutually acted in those days, they sent some bishops to give him an account of their opinion and practice, he proudly refused either to see them or speak with them;[m] and not content to deprive them of the peace and communion of the church, he denied them the common offices of humanity and charity, forbidding the Christians at Rome so much as to entertain them. To Cyprian he gave very hard words; calling him false Christ, false apostle, deceitful worker: and no better did he treat Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and the churches of Iconium. But Cyprian (though a man otherwise of great gentleness and moderation) plainly told him,[n] that this was nothing but the effect of a proud, impertinent, imprudent, self-contradicting humour; that it proceeded from blindness and perverseness, from obstinacy and presumption, and directly tended to the patronage and encouragement of error and heresy. Firmilian[o] charged him with inhumanity, audaciousness, and insolence, with doing very unjust and unwarrantable things; that they at Rome, however vainly pretending apostolical authority, did not themselves exactly observe primitive tradition; that he could not but disdain Stephen's open and manifest folly, who, while he boasted so much of the eminency of his episcopal place, and contended that he had the succession of Peter, upon whom the foundations of the church were laid, did yet hereby introduce several other rocks, and build new churches upon them. And when, not long after, the controversy came to be canvassed in a synod of eighty-seven African bishops, whom Cyprian had assembled at Carthage for that purpose, in the speech that he made at the opening of the council, Cyprian taxed the pride and ambition of the bishop of Rome; telling them,[p] that they should all freely speak their minds, without judging or excommunicating any that were of another opinion; that none of them took upon himself to make himself "bishop of bishops," or by a tyrannical threatening to force his colleagues into a necessity of compliance: since every bishop, according to the power and liberty granted to him, had his proper rule and jurisdiction, and could no more be judged by another, than he

[m] Firmil. Ep. ad Cypr. inter Ep. Cypr. lxxv. p. 228.
[n] Epist. lxxiv. ad Pomp. per tot. p. 210.
[o] Epist. lxxv. supra citat. p. 217, etc.
[p] Synod. Carth. apud Cypr. p. 229.

himself could judge others; that in these matters they were to expect the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone had power both of appointing governors over his church, and of calling them to an account for their administration.

IV. By these instances (and many more, no doubt, which the history of those times would have set before us, had the church's records come safe to us) it appears, how early the bishops of Rome set out to usurp a dominion over the church; and though they generally met with opposition, yet they still went on, and vigorously improved all advantages; with what success, the Christian world has now for many ages found to their cost. And certainly never any stood fairer to start and carry on such a design. For,

First, their church was not only apostolical, but had been founded by two of the most eminent apostles, Peter and Paul, which gave a mighty reputation to it in after-ages; the Christian world bearing an extraordinary reverence to those great names, which the bishops of that see knew how to improve to their own advantage. For this reason, Irenæus calls the church of Rome[q] "the greatest and most eminent church, and most universally known," as being founded by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; and St. Augustine says,[r] that in it there always flourished the principality of the apostolic chair; and Origen took a journey on purpose to Rome,[s] to gratify his curiosity with the sight of so ancient and renowned a church. And upon this account must be discharged very many of those great things, which several of the fathers speak so liberally concerning the church of Rome; who thought they could never express a veneration big enough towards St. Peter, and consequently towards the place which he had honoured with his doctrine and residence, and watered with his blood: which, however spoken by them out of a devout intent, proved the first rounds of that ladder by which the Roman bishops mounted up to a supremacy above the rest; it happening, in a few ages, that nothing was talked of at Rome, but of the prince of the apostles, and the authority of the apostolic see, till almost every thing there became apostolical, and was covered with St. Peter's name.

Secondly, their church was planted in the imperial city, a

[q] Adv. Hæres. l. iii. c. 3. [r] Epist. 162. [s] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 14.

place that seemed born for empire and sovereignty, that had long since conquered, and at that time governed the greatest part of the world;[t] a city that was the centre of all nations, and the seat of majesty and magnificence, where all great affairs were transacted, and all the scenes of glory and greatness represented in a little compass; which could not but reflect a more than ordinary lustre upon those bishops that sat at the upper end of the world, and make them appear considerably bigger, more conspicuous and useful than the rest of their brethren, and, by reason of the general confluence of all nations to Rome, enable them, in a little time, to draw the cognizance of ecclesiastic causes from all parts thither. It was this convenience of situation gave them opportunity to insinuate themselves into the favour of the emperors, and by their power to enlarge their own borders, yea, and to succour and relieve their clients and dependants, which made many to court their protection and assistance, though often with the loss of their own freedom and liberty. This was especially done after the emperors became Christians, the Roman church being by them enriched with vast honours and privileges, accounting that the greatness of that church would not a little contribute to the splendour and magnificence of the empire. And though the imperial seat was quickly translated to another place, yet besides that the emperors a long time retained their affection for Rome, what the pope lost in one sense, he gained in another, making use of the emperor's absence to enhance his own power and revenue, till he was able, not only to lord it over his brethren, but over princes themselves.

Thirdly, the Roman church continued for several ages the seat of true apostolic doctrine, maintaining that character that St. Paul had given them, that "their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world;" it being here preserved pure and uncorrupt, while a great part of the Christian world besides was overrun with error and heresy, and torn in pieces by schisms and factions. This made Rome, in those days, (while it remained sound and orthodox,) in a manner the standard of catholic communion, most other churches veering in point of communion, as they found the wind blow from that quarter, and saw how the

[t] Herod. Hist. l. i. in vit. Commod. et Symmach. l. iv. ep. 28. (ad Protad.) videsis not. Lectii.

business fared at Rome. Accordingly, Theodosius, in the beginning of his reign, resolving to reform the doctrine of the church, then miserably degenerated in the Eastern parts, commanded,[u] that that faith only should take place that was professed by pope Damasus and Peter of Alexandria, that faith and religion which St. Peter had delivered to the church of Rome, and which had all along till that time flourished there. This made way for appeals, every party being desirous to gain the good will of that church, and to have its bishop pronounce for their cause, till from an honorary arbitration it came to be claimed as a right and due. And persons (especially those who were persecuted in their own countries for their adherence to the catholic faith) were the more encouraged to repair hither, because here they were kindly treated, and hospitably entertained; a piece of charity which the bishops of that church, by reason of their ample possessions and large endowments, were very capable to afford. For besides their standing rents and revenues, their gains by collections and oblations was so great, that by them alone, in the time of pope Damasus, they were enabled to live in a state and grandeur like that of temporal princes, if we may believe the account given by Ammianus Marcellinus;[x] and the story is known of Prætextatus, (a zealous Gentile,) designed to be consul, who reflecting upon the plenty of that see, was wont pleasantly to tell pope Damasus,[y] "make me but bishop of Rome, and I will immediately become a Christian." It is certain that church could never want plentiful incomes flowing in upon it; and as charitable it was in those days as it was wealthy, and was not only very kind to strangers when they came thither, but was wont to transmit very liberal distributions of its charity to foreign churches, to relieve the necessities of the brethren that were under persecution, and were condemned to the mines; as Dionysius bishop of Corinth tells us in his letter[z] to Soter bishop of Rome, written about the year 174, and that this had been the custom of that church from the very infancy of Christianity.

Fourthly, the church of Rome, by the advantage of the imperial city, was capable of propagating the Christian doctrine

[u] De fid. Cathol. Cod. Theodos. leg. 2. vid. Sozom. l. vii. c. 4.
[x] Lib. xxvii. c. 3. [y] Hieron. ad Pammach. adv. error. Jo. Hierosol.
[z] Ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 23.

into several parts of the West, to send out disciples, receive despatches, transmit directions, and supply all emergencies that might arise. Accordingly, upon this foundation, the popes built and advanced a claim to superiority and dominion. Thus Damasus,[a] writing to the bishops of Africa, tells them, that in all doubtful cases they ought to have recourse to him as to the head, and thence to take their determination, from whence they had received their institution and instruction in the Christian faith. And pope Innocent tells Decentius bishop of Eugubium,[b] that all the churches in those parts ought to take their measures from Rome, and nothing to be valid but what is received from thence; it being evident, that no churches had been planted in Italy, France, Spain, Africa, Sicily, and the interjacent islands, by any, but such as had been ordained by St. Peter, or his successors. And this is the plea we are so often urged with, whereby the Roman see challenges jurisdiction over England, its commissionating Augustine the monk to convert the Saxons, and settle religion in these parts. But were there no more to be offered in answer to it, this were enough, that Christianity had for several ages been planted here, before ever Austin set his foot on English ground; as perhaps we may have occasion to shew afterwards. In short, though it became churches, thus planted, to bear a very grateful respect to that mother church that was the instrument to convey to them the Christian faith, yet did it lay them under no obligation to subjection and servitude: however, the church of Rome has handled the matter to its own advantage, and from the lenity and tenderness of a parent, had degenerated into the pride and cruelty of a stepmother; and not content to exercise authority over its own colonies, began to advance its banners over all the rest; proudly proclaiming itself the mother and mistress of all churches. I observe no more, than that pride seems to be a vice more peculiar to Rome than other places: it was this put the old Romans upon subduing the world; and by this the emperors tyrannized over it for some ages, and when Rome shifted its lords, it did not change its task-masters; the ambition which the emperors laid down, the popes took up, and prosecuted it by far worse arts and methods than ever the Romans did of old. St. Basil[c]

[a] Epist. v. Concil. vol. iii. p. 283. ed. reg. [b] Innoc. Epist. i. Ibid. vol. iv. p. 5.
[c] Epist. ccxxxix. ad Euseb. s. 2. vol. iii. p. 368.

more than once complains of the τῆς Δυτικῆς ὀφρὺς, "the pride of the West," and how little help was to be expected from them that neither understood the truth, nor would be content to learn it; that he was resolved to write to the pope, to let him know that it did not become him to insult over and add to the miseries of the afflicted, nor to think pride to be honourable, a thing alone sufficient to render a man odious in the sight of God: and elsewhere he expresses a very passionate resentment,[d] that he hated the pride of that church.

V. Furnished with these advantages, the Roman prelates set up for themselves, and gave not over till they had, by right and wrong, spread such an ecclesiastic empire over the world, as would admit neither superior nor equal: in order to the discovery whereof, it will be necessary to inquire what was of old the proper jurisdiction of the bishops of Rome, before they removed those ancient land-marks which the fathers had set. We have elsewhere observed,[e] (what has been remarked by many, and indeed is evident to any one versed in church-antiquity,) that in the primitive times, the external polity of the church was conformed, as near as might be, to the mode that obtained in the civil state. Now the whole Roman empire consisted of thirteen dioceses, (for so they began to style those large divisions about the time of Constantine,) whereof seven in the Eastern parts, Egypt, the Orient, or East properly so called, Asiana, Pontica, Thrace, Macedonia, and Dacia; and six in the West, Italy, Africa, Illyricum, France, Spain, and Britain; besides the Roman prefecture, extending to the provinces round about the city, which had anciently been a peculiar government, equal, yea superior in dignity to any diocese; whereof hereafter. In each of these dioceses were several provinces, (one hundred and eighteen in all,) the chief city whereof, in every province, was the metropolis, that had a kind of jurisdiction over all the rest; both title and dignity being peculiarly settled by imperial constitution. Now the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction were concurrent after this manner: in every city there was a civil judge, who presided over it and the towns about it, and to him answered the bishop of that city: in every province, a proconsul or president

[d] Ap. Baron. ad Ann. 372.

[e] Prim. Chr. par. i. c. 8. Vid. Breerwood's Quær. i. et Berter. Pithan. fere per tot. aliosque.

resided at the metropolis, governed that whole division, received appeals, and determined all important cases brought before him from the inferior cities: correspondent to him was the metropolitan, or (as they after called him) the archbishop, whose see was in the same city, who superintended the several churches, and ordained the several bishops within his province: and then, in every diocese, there was a *vicarius*, or lieutenant, who kept his residence in the principal city, thence despatched the imperial edicts, and there heard and decided those causes that were not finally determined by inferior courts; and concurrent with him in ecclesiastical matters was the primate, or (as some of them were more eminently styled) the patriarch, who presided over the several metropolitans within that diocese, appointed the conventions of his clergy, umpired the differences that arose between the several bishops, and gave the last determination to all appeals brought before him. And thus, by an orderly subordination of deacons and presbyters to their bishops, of bishops to their immediate metropolitans, of metropolitans to their respective primates or patriarchs, and by a mutual correspondence between the several primates of every diocese, the affairs of the Christian church were carried on with great decorum and regularity.

VI. This excellent platform was not framed and set up all at once. In the more early ages, Christianity being generally first preached and planted in the greater cities, and the ecclesiastical government settled there, thence spread itself into the neighbouring country, and persons were thence despatched to preach and attend the ministeries of religion in those rural plantations; who yet were in all things steered and directed by the bishop and his ecclesiastic senate residing in the city. As churches multiplied, and Christianity extended itself into wider circles, it was found necessary to fix a particular bishop almost in every city; to whom was committed the care and superintendency over all the clergy and people there, and in all the towns and villages belonging to the jurisdiction of that place. But because controversies began to arise between the several bishops, (and sometimes between them and the inferior clergy,) which could not easily be determined, where every one's authority was independent, it was necessary that some one should preside over all the other bishops of that province, as the proconsul did in the civil state, who might convene synodical assemblies, adjust the

differences, and manage the ordinations of the provincial bishops: and for this, none could be so fit as he that resided in the metropolis of the province, (thence called metropolitan,) partly because the countries, for the most part, round about had originally derived their Christianity from thence, and it was but fit they should pay a peculiar respect to the mother church; partly because most persons had occasion to resort thither for the despatch of business, and might with the same opportunity conveniently transact both their civil and ecclesiastic matters; and partly because it was but reasonable, that the bishop of so eminent a place should τῇ τιμῇ προηγεῖσθαι, "have an honourable presidency over the rest," as the council of Antioch particularly provides in this case;[f] ordaining accordingly, that though every bishop might ordain presbyters and deacons, and manage the affairs of his own παροικία, or "particular diocese," (as we now call it,) yet that all the bishops of the province should acknowledge the metropolitan, and attempt nothing of moment without his knowledge and consent: which they there enact, not as any novel constitution, but κατὰ τὸν ἀρχαιότερον κρατήσαντα ἐκ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν κανόνα, as they tell us, "according to a most ancient rule and canon, that had been in force from the times of their forefathers." To the metropolitan, then, upon every extraordinary occasion, the provincial bishops addressed themselves; to him also other metropolitans, such especially as lay nearest to him, were wont to send letters of communion, to testify their consent with him in the faith, (a confession whereof every new metropolitan used to send abroad upon his advancement to his see,) and mutually to consult each other's advice in all important cases.

VII. This, it is plain, from the writings of St. Cyprian and others, was the way of administration during those first and most early ages of Christianity: private causes every bishop judged of within his particular jurisdiction, where taking to him the assistance of his clergy, his presbyters, and deacons, they did *communi consilio ponderare*, "weigh things by common advice and deliberation;"[g] where the case was of greater importance, or more general concernment, it was referred to a provincial synod, wherein the chief bishop of the province presided, and directed all affairs. Here the ordination of bishops was usually performed; or where a synod could not conveniently be had, by

[f] Can. 9.

[g] Cypr. Epist. xxxviii. p. 74. et xxxii. p. 65.

as many bishops as could be got together; the rest, who were absent,[h] by writing under their hands testifying their consent; and the whole either actually managed by, or at least done by the allowance and confirmation of the chief bishop. Here also criminal bishops were deposed, and the same way of general suffrage observed: thus when Cornelius[i] and his synod at Rome had condemned and cast out Novatian for his schismatical usurpation of that see, the bishops that were not present at the council did by their letters ratify and subscribe that decree.

VIII. In reference to the affairs of churches abroad, they acted by a kind of mutual consociation; they communicated counsels, interposed in differences, opposed the same common enemies, and upon all occasions afforded ready help and assistance to one another, that *dilectio communis* that Cyprian[k] so often speaks of; the common bond of love and charity obliging them to advise together, that so, by joint consultations, things might be carried on to the best advantage of ecclesiastic administration: for they looked upon themselves, he tells us,[l] as members of the same body of the church, though stretched out into many several provinces, and that therefore they were bound to have care one of another, and to watch over the welfare of the whole body. Upon a person's election to any of the greater sees, they were wont to send their congratulatory letters, to give him joy of that place, to signify their concurrence with his advancement to a share of the government of the church, and their communion with him in the faith: thus Cyprian by letters approved Cornelius's election to the see of Rome,[m] which he did, he tells us, according to divine tradition and ecclesiastic institution; nay, he sent to all the bishops of his province, requiring them by their letters to do the like; and when Marcian, bishop of Arles, was deposed for his siding with Novatian, Cyprian wrote to pope Stephen,[n] to send him word who succeeded in that bishopric, that so he might know to whom to direct his communicatory letters. When any person was duly excommunicated in one church, he could not be admitted to communion in another: thus when Felicissimus, who had been excommunicated by Cyprian and the African synod, fled to Rome,[o]

[h] Vid. Conc. Nic. Can. 4. [i] Cornel. Epist. ad Fab. Antioch. ap. Euseb. l. vi. c. 43.
[k] Epist. xxix. p. 69. [l] Epist. xxxvi. p. 71. [m] Epist. xlv. ad Cornel. p. 86.
[n] Epist. lxvii. ad Steph. p. 179. in fin. [o] Epist. lix. ad Cornel. p. 126.

and came thither guarded with a potent faction, he found the doors shut against him; whereof Cornelius advised Cyprian by letters, which the good man commends as replenished with brotherly love, ecclesiastic discipline, and episcopal censure: and when the legates of Novatian (who had procured himself to be irregularly ordained bishop of Rome, for which he was synodically condemned) came into Africa, Cyprian rejected them, and utterly refused to receive them to communion.[p]

In short, no sooner did any extraordinary emergency arise, but notice was presently given of it to other churches, and advice returned what was fit to be done in those matters, and all possible assistance afforded towards the despatching of them. In all which transactions, the bishop of Rome was no otherwise considered than (as all others were) as a bishop of the catholic church, nor was his sentence any more regarded than that of other bishops. Donatus *a casis nigris* accused Cecilian,[q] bishop of Carthage, to Constantine the Great. The emperor referred the case to pope Melchiades and three French bishops, together with whom assembled fifteen bishops of Italy, who gave judgment against Donatus. Wherein, as the pope acted as the emperor's delegate, and had no more power than the rest of his colleagues, so the sturdy African slighted his judgment, and appealed from it. Constantine hereupon refers the business to a synod at Arles in France, anno 314, where the former sentence is again brought under examination, and this thought no injury or dishonour to the bishop of Rome; nay, his legates, in that council, subscribed only in the fifth place,[r] as the subscriptions published by Sirmond, out of an ancient copy, stand at this day. In short, it is ingenuously confessed by pope Pius the Second,[s] then cardinal, that before the time of the Nicene council very little regard was had to the church of Rome. By all which we see how the government of the church, in those days, was carried on: bishops superintended the affairs of the church in every city and its adjacent territory; over them were metropolitans and provincial synods; and with foreign churches they transacted by a mutual agreement and confederation for the good of the whole, but without any coercive power over one another.

[p] Epist. xliv. ad Cornel. p. 85.

[q] Optat. l. i. p. 27, etc. et Const. Epist. ad Melch. ap. Euseb. l. x. c. 5.

[r] Vid. Conc. vol. i. col. 1428.

[s] Epist. cclxxxii.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, AND POWER OF THE BISHOPS OF ROME, AS IT IS REPRESENTED IN THE CANONS OF THE NICENE COUNCIL.

The sixth canon of the synod of Nice set down, with the occasion of it. Seven observations drawn from that canon. I. That the larger bounds of ecclesiastic jurisdiction were the Roman provinces. A province, what. Whether the countries in Italy so called. II. That the chief church-governor in every province was the metropolitan. The prudence and convenience of that way of government. Patriarchs proved not to be intended in the Nicene canon. III. That the bishop of Rome, no less than the rest, had his proper and limited metropolitical power. This owned by some of the greatest champions of Rome. IV. That the metropolitic sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch were ever of the greatest note in the Christian church, and of these Rome the chief. The eminency of sees according to the greatness of the cities wherein they were planted. This gave precedency to the church of Rome. The three sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch ascribed to St. Peter. Blasphemous things spoken of the pope upon that account. Primacy allowed to the see of Rome. No supremacy belonging to it. The Christian church then knew of no such supereminent power. V. That the rights of the Roman metropolitan were not due by any divine constitution, but by custom and the practice of the church. This plainly shewed to be the sense of this, and other following councils. VI. That the ordination of provincial bishops was one of the prime rights and privileges of every metropolitan within his own jurisdiction. The fourth, sixth, and seventh canons of this council noted to that purpose. The same shewed to be the determination of other synods. What other rights belonged to metropolitans. VII. That this way of ecclesiastic administration was not any late novel institution, but founded upon ancient custom and practice. What this antiquity implies. The original of metropolitans briefly inquired into. Several instances of this way of government noted in the second and third centuries. The word "metropolitan" not met with till the council of Nice. But the thing long before. The sum of the observations upon this canon.

In this condition stood things at that time when the great council assembled at Nice, anno 325, where what had hitherto been transacted only by custom and mutual consent, became then a law of the church. For Alexander, the venerable bishop of Alexandria, having complained to the synod, that the metropolitical rights of that see had been invaded by the irregular and ambitious attempts of Meletius, the schismatical bishop of Lycopolis in Thebais, who, during the late persecution, had, amongst other crimes, taken upon him to ordain bishops, and to confer inferior orders wherever he came, the synod did not only depose Meletius,[t] and in a manner null his ordinations, but passed, among others, this following canon.[u]

[t] Vid. Epiph. Hæres. lxviii. c. 3. Sozom. l. i. c. 24.

[u] Can. 6.

"Let ancient customs still take place; those that are in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, that the bishop of Alexandria have power over all these; because such also is the custom of the bishop of Rome. And accordingly in Antioch, and in other provinces, let the privileges be preserved to the churches. This also is altogether evident, that if any man be made a bishop without the consent of the metropolitan, this great synod decrees such a one to be no bishop. And if two or three, out of a contentious humour, shall oppose the common election duly and regularly made according to the canon of the church, let the majority of voices in this case prevail."

In this canon, which has been the subject of infinite debate and controversy, there are several things very observable to our purpose, which every impartial unprejudicate reader will see do naturally flow from it.

First, That the larger bounds of ecclesiastical jurisdiction at that time were concurrent with the Roman provinces.

Secondly, That the chief church governor within every province was the metropolitan.

Thirdly, That the bishop of Rome, no less than the rest, had his proper and limited metropolitical power.

Fourthly, That the metropolitic sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, were ever of greatest note in the Christian church, and of these Rome the chief.

Fifthly, That the rights of the Roman metropolitan were not due by any divine constitution, but flowed only from custom and the practice of the church.

Sixthly, That the ordination of provincial bishops was one of the prime rights and privileges of every metropolitan within his own jurisdiction.

Seventhly, That this way of ecclesiastic administration was not any late novel institution, but was founded upon ancient custom and practice.

All which observations I shall briefly explain and make good.

I. "That the larger bounds of ecclesiastic jurisdiction were the Roman provinces." Every city, besides what was within its walls and immediate suburbs, had usually some adjacent territory, whither its government did extend, as Strabo[x] notes of Nemausus, or Nismes, a city of the Gallia Narbonensis, that it

[x] Geograph. l. iv. p. 186. vid. Plin. l. iii. c. 4.

had under it twenty-four villages, all well peopled and inhabited, and so commonly in other places; and these were the towns and villages (*αἱ ὑπ' αὐτὴν χώραι*, as they are called in the ninth canon of Antioch) that were under the superintendency and jurisdiction of the city bishop. But a province was a collection of many cities, with all the tracts and territories belonging to them; and was greater or less, according to the custom of places, or as the will of princes had set them out.

Augustus, (as Strabo,[y] who lived about that time, informs us,) when he resolved to commit some parts of the empire to the immediate care of the senate, and to reserve the rest to himself, divided each moiety *εἰς πλείους ἐπαρχίας*, "into several provinces," and caused a *rationarium*, or "book" to be made of it, (this he did out of the commentaries of Balbus,[z] whom he had appointed to measure the several parts of the empire.) Some account of these provinces Strabo there gives us, but a more full and particular account is given by Dion Cassius.[a] How these provinces stood divided in the following ages, especially from the times of Constantine, is distinctly and accurately set down in the *Notitia Imperii*, composed under the reign of the younger Theodosius.

I observe no more, than that, if at Augustus's settlement (which is taken notice of, and objected by some[b]) the countries in Italy were not styled provinces, but regions, (he divided it, says Pliny,[c] into eleven regions; whence Italy and the provinces, and *jus Italicum*, and *jus Provinciale* are frequently distinguished,) yet this distinction held not long, nor universally, the words being promiscuously used, as is evident from the *Scriptores Rei agrariæ*, (some whereof, if their titles belie them not, lived not long after Augustus's age,) where we find, more than once,[d] the "territory of the province of Picenum," as well as the "region of Picenum," the province of Apulia and Calabria,[e] of Valeria,[f] of Tuscia,[g] and the like. And for after-ages, especially from the times of Constantine, no man can doubt of it, that has but once looked either into the Justinian or Theodosian Code.

[y] Lib. xvii. p. 84.

[z] Vid. J. Front. de Colon. inter scr. Rei Agr. a Goes. edit. p. 141. frag. de Term. ib. p. 148.

[a] Lib. liii. in vit. August.

[b] Sirmond. Censur. par. i. c. 2. p. 10. Aleand. Refut. Conject. par. i. c. 3. p. 25.

[c] Lib. iii. c. 5.

[d] Front. ubi supra, p. 118. 123. et alibi.

[e] Ibid. p. 127.

[f] Ibid. p. 144.

[g] Hyg. de limit. ibid. p. 211.

II. "That the chief church-governor within every province was the metropolitan;" that is, the bishop that resided in the metropolis, or mother-city of the province. For as the preventing schism and disorder had necessitated provincial bishops (who being all equal had no power one over the other) to choose one common president to umpire and determine differences, and manage those affairs which could not be done by every single bishop, so reason and conveniency, the example of the civil government, and the greatness of the place, pleaded for the bishop of the metropolis to be the person, who hence derived the title of Metropolitan. And this Salmasius himself,[h] how ill a friend soever to the whole episcopal order, cannot but confess was wisely contrived, and that had but metropolitans contained themselves within their proper bounds, there could not have been a more useful and laudable institution. His business was, upon all important occasions, synodically to summon together the bishops of his province, and therein to inquire into their miscarriages and misdemeanors, to judge of the contentions that arose between them, to ordain persons to vacant bishoprics, or at least to ratify their ordination, and to direct all transactions that were of greater and more general concernment. Therefore the fathers of Antioch take care,[i] that forasmuch as all that have any business to despatch are forced to go to the metropolis, therefore the bishops in every province should own, honour, and give precedence to the bishop that presided in the metropolis, and attempt nothing of moment without his concurrence; and this according to a more ancient canon derived to them from their forefathers. By the ancient canon, here spoken of, cannot be meant this of Nice, which was but sixteen years before it, and therefore, without doubt, refers to the thirty-fourth canon of the apostles, which almost in the same words commands the bishops in every nation to own him who is first or chief amongst them, and to esteem him as head, and to do nothing of moment without his consent, which truly expresses the ancient practice of the church: these apostolic canons being nothing else but a collection of rules and customs agreed upon in the first ages of Christianity. For (that I may note this by the way) it is vain to think, that a thing then first began to be, when we find it first mentioned or enjoined by a synodal decree; the

[h] Appar. ad Primat. pap. p. 273.

[i] Can. 9.

canons in such cases being very oft expressive of a more ancient practice, which they then take notice of, or enforce, only because some extraordinary accidents at that time may have given particular occasion for it: as here at Nice, in the case of the rights of metropolitans, which the canon mentions and resettles, only because Meletius's usurpation had brought it into question. It had been long before an ancient custom, and having lately received some little shock, the church no sooner had an opportunity of meeting together in a general council, but it established these metropolitical privileges by its œcumenical authority. There are, I know, and they, too, men of no mean name and note, both heretofore and of later times, who tell us, that this Nicene canon is to be understood not of metropolitans, but patriarchs: but where does the council say, or so much as hint any such thing? the synod both here and in all other places constantly calls them metropolitans, and makes the bounds of their jurisdiction to be provinces, not dioceses. And indeed the word diocese, as relating to this extent of ecclesiastic government, was not in use till above an entire age after. Nay, perhaps at this time it was scarce in use for the larger division of countries in the civil state: for it was but about this time that Constantine new modelled the government, and brought in dioceses as comprehending several provinces under them.

So that either here must be patriarchs without dioceses, or if the canon be meant (as some explain it) of *metropolitani metropolitanorum*, of some prime and principal metropolitans, that presided over the metropolitans of the several provinces within their jurisdiction, then it is plain the synod must intend such wherever it mentions metropolitans, for it all along speaks of them as of the same. In the fourth canon it provides, that in every province a bishop ordained shall be confirmed by the metropolitan; which is necessarily to be restrained to proper provincial metropolitans. In this sixth canon it speaks more particularly, and because the metropolitic rights had been invaded in Egypt, ordains that the bishop of Alexandria, no less than he of Rome, and that he of Antioch, and the churches in all other provinces, should still enjoy their ancient privileges. Where we see it speaks of them all without any difference in this respect as provincial churches. And thus the ancient version of this canon (whereof more hereafter) understood it, when it

rendered it thus, *in cæteris provinciis privilegia propria reserventur metropolitanis ecclesiis*, "that at Antioch, and in the other provinces, the metropolitan churches should have their own privileges."

And to put the case out of doubt what the council meant, the canon adds in the close, that no bishop should be made without the consent of the metropolitan. Nothing therefore can be more absurd, than to say, that patriarchs are meant in the former part of the canon, and metropolitans only in the latter, whenas the canon itself makes no difference. And, indeed, were that the meaning, the grave and wise fathers of that council took an effectual course that posterity should never understand their mind. If we look into the following canon, that secures the rights of the metropolitan church of Cæsarea in Palestine, and though it grants the next place of honour to the bishop of Jerusalem, yet still it subjects him to his own metropolitan. And I suppose it will puzzle any man to give a wise reason, why the church of Jerusalem (for which the Christian world ever had so great and so just a veneration) should be subject to that of Cæsarea, but only that Cæsarea was the metropolis of that province, and so had been ever since the time of Vespasian; and accordingly Josephus says,[k] it was the greatest city in the country; and Tacitus[l] calls it the head of Judea. So miserably does Alexander Aristinus blunder in his exposition of this canon, when by virtue of it he makes the bishop of Jerusalem to become a patriarch, and yet withal to be subject to the metropolitan of Cæsarea, or, which is all one, that the metropolitan of Cæsarea should not hereby lose his ancient power and dignity. As if any patriarch, and much more one of the five greater, could be subject to a private metropolitan; or a metropolitan could have his ancient rights reserved to him, when at the same time a considerable part of them are taken from him. But patriarchs were not then heard, or so much as dreamt of in the church; nothing being truer than what Balsamon has observed[m] in this case, that anciently all the metropolitans of provinces were *αὐτοκέφαλοι*, "absolute and independent," and ordained by none but their own provincial bishops.

III. "That the bishop of Rome, no less than the rest, had his

[k] De bell. Jud. l. iii. c. 28.

[l] Hist. l. ii. s. 79. ed. Brotier.

[m] In Can. ii. Concil. Const. p. 88.

proper and limited metropolitical power." This is so evidently the sense of the canon, that few, who have, otherwise, will good enough, have yet the hardiness to oppose it. The sun itself is not clearer at noon-day, than that hereby the council designed that the bishop of Alexandria should have the same power within his province that the bishop of Rome had in his. "Let the bishop of Alexandria (says the canon) have all his ancient and accustomed powers and privileges in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, ἐπειδὴ, since, or forasmuch, as the bishop of Rome has the like custom;" that is, (as a learned and zealous champion for the pope's supremacy does yet with great ingenuity expound it,[n]) "that he, and none but he, should exercise jurisdiction within his own bounds; as the Alexandrian bishop has prescribed limits to his diocese, so also has he of Rome: and as he of Rome manages the affairs of his own diocese without the interposal or meddling of any other person, so we will that he of Alexandria shall have the same power, and that none shall obstruct him in the exercise of it."

The canon then makes a double comparison between these two metropolitans: the one respecting the extent of their jurisdiction, that one was confined and limited as well as the other; the other, the fulness of their power, which they might exercise within their respective limits, and that none might presume to invade or hinder it; but by the same right by which the Roman prelate governed his churches, by the same might he of Alexandria the churches subject to him.

One of the Greek scholiasts sums up the canon into these words:[o] "Let the bishop of Alexandria have power over Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis; and the Roman bishop over those places that are subject to Rome." Harmenopulus[p] expresses it in somewhat more general terms: "Let the ancient customs of archbishops still prevail, and every one have power over his own province." I inquire not now what were the peculiar bounds within which the power of the bishops of Rome was terminated: it is enough at present that, whether larger or narrower, limits he had, which he might not regularly pass, and that the church of Rome was in those days accounted a particular church, and

[n] L. Allat. de consens. Eccles. Orient. et Occid. l. i. c. 12. n. 4. p. 190.

[o] Alex. Arist. in loc.

[p] Epit. Can. sect. 1. tit. i. in Jur. Gr. Rom. p. 1.

as much a member of the church universal, as Alexandria, Antioch, or that of any other province.

IV. "That the metropolitic sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, were ever of greatest note in the Christian church, and of these Rome the chief." Hence they are here particularly named, while others are dismissed with an *et cætera*; and Rome, as the most eminent, made the exemplar according to which the rights of Alexandria were to be recovered and resettled. It were impertinent to shew that respect was always paid to places proportionable to their temporal power and greatness; St. Cyprian[q] long since told us, that the reason why Rome had the precedency of Carthage, was *pro magnitudine sua*, "because it was the greater city;" and it were as endless as it is needless to prove, that the places mentioned in this canon were capital cities of the empire: Rome was μητρόπολις τῆς Ῥωμανίας, (as Athanasius styles it,[r]) "the metropolis, or chief city of the Roman world;" it had for several ages been the governing city, and was still the seat of empire; the greatness whereof the geographical poet has no less briefly and elegantly thus summed up:[s]

> Ῥώμη τιμήεσσα, δ' ἐμῶν μέγας οἶκος ἀνάκτων,
> Μήτηρ πασάων πολίων, ἀφνειὸν ἔδεθλον.
>
> "Rome triumphs in the imperial seat, and is
> Wealth's storehouse, and the world's metropolis."

Alexandria, besides the vastness of the place, numerousness of its inhabitants, the riches and plenty of its traffic, was the seat of the imperial viceroy, called the Augustal Prefect: indeed, it was δευτέρα τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον, "the second city under the sun;"[t] that is, μεγίστη μετὰ τὴν Ῥώμην, as Aristides styles it,[u] "the greatest next to Rome;" and thence, by ancient writers, emphatically called "the city."[x] Antioch was frequently the court of emperors, constantly the residence of their lieutenants; the most ancient, rich, and populous city of the East, commonly styled Antioch the Great. Now the greatness of these places added a proportionable reputation to their several bishops, it being but reasonable that they should τῇ τιμῇ προηγεῖσθαι, (as

[q] Epist. lii. ad Cornel. p. 97.
[r] Hist. Arian. ad Monachos, s. 35.
[s] Dionys. orbis descript. 355.
[t] Dion. Orat. xxxii. (ad Alex.) p. 372.
[u] Orat. in Rom. vol. i. p. 205. ed. Oxon. 1722.
[x] Alexand. ap. Eustath. comment. in Homer. Iliad. β'. Stephan. in v. Ἀλεξανδρ.

the fathers at Antioch speak,[y]) "precede others in honour," who presided in the most eminent and honourable cities.

And because Rome was confessedly the greatest and noblest city of the empire, hence the church there had an honorary precedency before all others, and the bishops of it, in all public meetings and consultations, had the first place allowed them, and upon all occasions a mighty deference and respect paid to them, and their favour was courted, and addresses made to them from all parts: and in this sense, it is plain, the ancients understood the honour due to the Roman bishop. When the council of Constantinople decrees,[z] that the bishop of that city shall have the next place to him of Rome, for that Constantinople was New Rome, it sufficiently shews upon what foundation the precedency of the Roman prelate stood: and that of Chalcedon[a] much more expressly; that the cause why the fathers gave privileges to the see of old Rome was, because that was the imperial city. And in pursuance of these canons, (*κατὰ τοὺς αὐτῶν ὅρους*,) the emperor Justinian enacts,[b] that the bishop of old Rome should be *πρῶτος πάντων τῶν ἱερέων*, "the first of all bishops."

I know there are[c] who place the eminency of these three great sees upon another bottom, and tell us it was because they were all founded by St. Peter, two of them by himself, and that of Alexandria by the ministry of St. Mark, his peculiar disciple, sent thither by his immediate direction and authority; and the assertion further improved, that these three cities being severally the chief cities of the three then known parts of the world, Europe, Asia, and Africa, thence it follows that the government of these three great churches, and in them of the whole Christian world, is lodged in St. Peter's successor:[d] and it is added, (with greater boldness, shall I say, or blasphemy?) that St. Peter herein expressed a lively representation both of the unity of the Godhead and of the Holy Trinity; and that as it is but one and the same episcopal office that is in a bishop, a metropolitan, and a patriarch, so a trinity of patriarchs meets in the unity of the pope; "so that in the see of the prince of the apostles, there is

[y] Can. 9. [z] Can. 3. [a] Can. 28.

[b] *Διάταξ. ρλα'.* p. 374. fac. 2. edit. Græc.

[c] L. Allat. de consens. Eccles. Orient. et Occid. l. i. c. 2. n. 6, 7, etc. p. 12, etc. Morin. exercit. Eccles. l. i. exerc. 1.

[d] Morin. ib. p. 8. 11. Videsis etiam Hieron. Aleand. de Region. Suburb. dissert. xi. c. 2.

an unity in trinity, and a trinity in unity." But where men can suffer their wits wantonly to sport at this rate, (though it is gravely brought in, by way of argument, by some, otherwise learned enough,) it is no wonder that nothing should be stuck at, true or false, that may serve their cause. But I spare any further censure of this author,[e] finding by his Life (published since the writing of these papers) that he repented afterwards of so hasty and inconsiderate an undertaking, and oft intended to have brought that work under a review and castigation: and, indeed, any man may at first sight discern it was the issue of a juvenile heat, and wanted the corrections of calmer and maturer thoughts.

But perhaps it might prove no such easy task to make it out that St. Peter founded those three sees; and if he did, that any such authority, as is claimed, is thence derived to the see of Rome. Antioch and Alexandria did always maintain their jurisdiction independent, though the popes frequently inculcated their being originally instituted by St. Peter, as a kind of obligation to Rome, and that which reflected the greatest honour upon those churches. And the fathers, we see, found their preeminence upon the glory and majesty of their cities; and none more expressly than that of Rome, the bishop whereof was therefore honoured, caressed, and addressed unto, because bishop of Rome: and had he contented himself with that place and deference which the fathers gave him, and not broken down inclosures, and trampled over the heads of his brethren, we should neither have envied nor denied it. And though perhaps it might admit some dispute, whether Rome, having for so many ages lost the honour of being the imperial city, the privileges conferred upon that church, upon that account, ought not in reason to abate proportionably; yet we are willing to grant, what genuine antiquity did allow, that the bishop of that place, containing himself within primitive rules and orders, should be esteemed the most honourable among all Christian bishops; that he should be first, but not lord, much less tyrant over his brethren. The privileges assigned him by the ancient canons, were *τιμῆς πρεσβεῖα, οὐ μέντοι αὐθεντίας τυραννικῆς*, (says a late learned patriarch of Alexandria,[f]) "privileges of honour, not conveyances of a tyrannical power to make or abrogate laws as he pleases."

[e] Vit. I. Morin. p. 5. 7.

[f] Melet. Alex. *ἐπιστ. β'. περὶ τῆς τοῦ πάπα ἀρχῆς*, p. 14.

And, therefore, suppose the τὰ πρωτεῖα, "the primacy" of the church of Rome (mentioned in the beginning of this sixth Nicene canon, as it is quoted by Paschasinus, the pope's legate in the council of Chalcedon) were granted, yet who knows not that there is a primacy of order as well as power, a primacy amongst equals; and such, it is plain, was that which the ancient councils did assign him, not an universal, monarchical, uncontrollable power and supremacy over the whole Christian church, which would have fundamentally destroyed the very design of this Nicene canon, which makes the bishops of Alexandria, Antioch, the other provinces, independent, and as supreme within their own limits as the pope is in his. Is there no difference between precedency and supremacy, between dignity and dominion? Let the Roman church be the head of all churches, (as it is sometimes styled by the ancients, and frequently challenged by the popes,) it is so only in an honorary sense; and in that respect other churches, especially that of Constantinople,[g] have the same title given to them. Where then shall we find the sovereign, arbitrary, and unbounded power of the bishop of Rome? and where, but in the pride, ambition, and usurpation of that see? certain I am, it has not the least footing in this or any other ancient council.

Nor can it be supposed, that had the fathers of this venerable synod known of any such supereminent power of the Roman bishop, as is now pretended to, (and know it they must, if there had been any, meeting from all parts of the world,) we cannot suppose, I say, they would have given the bishops of Alexandria, Antioch, &c. equal power within their respective provinces, without inserting into the canon a salvo to the supreme rights and prerogatives of the see of Rome; especially when we find them, in the very next canon, giving the bishop of Jerusalem an honourable session, but still with a proviso to preserve the rights of the metropolitan of that province.

V. "That the rights of the Roman metropolitan were not due by any divine constitution, but flowed only from custom and the practice of the church." This is here laid down as one of the main foundations upon which the whole body of the canon is built; the rights here conveyed not being divine institutions, but ἀρχαῖα ἔθη, "ancient customs," introduced by time and use,

g "Constantinopolitana ecclesia omnium aliarum est caput." Lib. i. Cod. Just. tit. xi. l. 24.

and a wise contrivance: which is not only the case of metropolitans in general, but is particularly applied to him of Rome, "it being (says the canon) the custom for the bishop of Rome to have such metropolitic power."

Had these good fathers known of any peculiar commission given by Christ to Peter, and in him to the bishop of Rome, to be his supreme and universal bishop upon earth, to govern his church by a despotical unaccountable power, or that our Lord had but so much as authorized and appointed him to be superior to all the bishops within the Roman province, it had been hard, not to say unjust and unreasonable in them to conceal it, and an irreparable injury to that church, to derive its authority from any meaner original; an injury which we cannot conceive but that the pope's legates, who were then in council, must have immediately entered their protest against. But the Christian world was as yet unacquainted with such notions, and the popes then either did not claim any such power, or, to be sure, durst not challenge it in that assembly, where they knew it must be shamefully baffled and rejected.

What power soever our Lord or his apostles conveyed to bishops, this is certain, that all bishops, as such, stand upon a common level, and that superiority and subordination among them is merely from human positive institution, borrowed from the forms in the civil state, and with great reason brought in to comply with the conveniencies and necessities of the church; and to this the fathers usually refer it. Thus we see they here determined the case of metropolitans. And in the following canon, the bishop of Jerusalem's taking place next to his metropolitan before all the other bishops of that province, is ascribed to custom, and ancient tradition. In the council of Ephesus, the bishop of Antioch was complained of for invading the rights of the metropolitan of Cyprus, in deciding whereof the fathers affirm,[h] it would be sufficient prejudice to his cause, if he had not ancient custom on his side: and having determined the case against him, decree, that every province should enjoy those original rights pure and inviolable, which had been derived to them by long continuance, κατὰ τὸ πάλαι κρατῆσαν ἔθος, "according as the power of ancient custom had prevailed." And when some years after, by reason of the incursions of the bar-

[h] Concil. Ephes. Can. 8.

barous people, the metropolitan of Cyprus was forced to remove to Nova Justinianopolis in the Hellespont, the fathers of the sixth council in Trullo confirmed his rights to him,[i] *κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαῖαν συνήθειαν*, "according to ancient custom:" for the holy fathers (say they) have determined, that customs should be preserved in every church.

VI. "That the ordination of provincial bishops was one of the prime rights and privileges of every metropolitan within his own jurisdiction." No man in those days was bound to go beyond his own metropolis, much less did they know of any obligation to seek to Rome either for consecration or confirmation. And for this the laws of the church are as express and peremptory as words could make them. Our great council had made provision herein by their fourth canon, that a bishop should be ordained by all the bishops in the province: but because, perhaps, business or distance might render that inconvenient, and sometimes impossible, they decree that it should be done by three, the rest testifying their consent in writing; and that the *τὸ κῦρος τῶν γινομένων*, "the validity of what was done," should be from the confirmation of the metropolitan in every province.

And because the case of Meletius was then before them, and had raised a mighty noise and clamour, they again establish this matter in the close of the sixth canon, by way of recapitulation, that whoever should be made bishop without the consent of his metropolitan, his ordination should be null and void; and that if any doubt and dispute arose in this case, the majority of votes should carry it: accordingly, in their synodical epistle[k] to the church of Alexandria, they tell them, they had taken care about the election of their bishops, and that it must be with the concurrence and confirmation of the bishop of Alexandria. This constitution we find unanimously ratified by almost all following councils: by that of Antioch[l] most expressly, by that of Laodicea,[m] by that of Sardica,[n] by the second[o] and fourth[p] councils of Carthage, by the general council of Chalcedon,[q] who take notice of the neglect of some metropolitans in delaying the ordinations of their provincial bishop; and in the particular controversy between Anastasius of Nice and Eunomius of Nicomedia,[r] they all with one voice ratify the Nicene canon.

[i] Can. 39. [k] Ap. Theod. l. i. c. 5. [l] Can. 19. [m] Can. 12. [n] Can. 6.
[o] Can. 12. [p] Can. 1. [q] Can. 25. [r] Conc. Chalced. Act. 13.

In all which canons, and infinite more that might be mentioned, there is not the least intimation given of any prerogative peculiar to the bishop of Rome, or that he has any power to take this right out of the hands of the respective metropolitans. Nor is ordination the only privilege which the synod of Nice vests in metropolitans, for though they more particularly insist upon this, because Meletius had given such fresh occasion by violating the metropolitan rights of Alexandria, yet in the beginning of the sixth canon they establish their privileges in general, that they should have *πάντων τούτων ἐξουσίαν*, and the *τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν*, "all the ancient powers and privileges that belonged to their churches in every province."

What these were, practice and the subsequent canons of the church do inform us: to take care that vacant sees were well supplied, to call provincial synods, to disperse canons there agreed on for the common good, to end controversies between their bishops, to admonish the unruly, to censure and suspend the irregular, to give communicatory letters to their provincial bishops that were to go into foreign parts, and such like. In short, the synod of Antioch (than which perhaps none ever made wiser and better rules for the government and discipline of the church) orders[s] the bishops of every province, not only to honour their metropolitan, but to do nothing of moment without his consent.

VII. Lastly, I observe hence, "That this way of ecclesiastic administration was not any late novel institution, but was founded upon ancient custom and practice." It was *ἀρχαῖον ἔθος*, says the canon most expressly. How far this antiquity does extend, it is not easy precisely to determine. Salmasius[t] himself grants it for an hundred years before the synod of Nice: and we would not have thanked him for a larger concession, had the state of things before that council been as clearly transmitted to us as they were afterwards. Indeed, the records and writings of those early ages are generally lost, and the defending Christianity from the assaults of heathens on the one side, and heretics on the other, take up the far greatest part of those few that remain. So that little light is afforded us to discover the originals of particular churches, and to trace out the gradual advances of polity and church-discipline. Whether the apostles themselves fixed a

[s] Can. 9.

[t] De primat. c. 4. p. 57.

superior bishop in every metropolis of the civil state, as some will have it; or whether the apostles only formed the scheme and draught, but left it to following ages to erect and set it up, as De Marca thinks,[u] I leave it to the reader, who is curious about these matters, to weigh their arguments, and then pass his sentence.

To me it seems probable, that it actually commenced not long after the apostolic age, when sects and schisms began to break in apace, and when the apostles, who were the supreme governors and moderators, being removed off the stage, and controversies multiplying between particular bishops, it was found necessary to pitch upon one in every province, to whom the umpirage of cases might be referred, and by whom all common and public affairs might be directed.

In the declining part of the second century, we find Philip styled,[x] not only bishop of the diocese of Gortyna, (*τῇ ἐκκλησία, τῇ παροικούσῃ Γόρτυναν,*) but also of all the rest of the churches or dioceses (*παροικίαι*) in Crete, among which Pinytus is reckoned bishop of the Parochia of Gnossus. Towards the latter end of the same century, we find several provincial synods convened for determining the paschal controversy:[y] pope Victor presided in that at Rome; in that of Palestine, Theophilus bishop of Cæsarea, and Narcissus of Jerusalem; where Narcissus is joined with Theophilus, because the bishop of Jerusalem had ever the place of honour next to his metropolitan of Cæsarea, and this (say our Nicene fathers) from custom and ancient tradition. Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, at the request of Victor, summoned a synod of the bishops of Asia, (i. e. of the Lydian or Proconsular Asia, whereof Ephesus was the metropolis,) wherein he was president, who all subscribed his opinion, as he tells us in his letter to pope Victor. In France there was a convention *τῶν κατὰ Γαλλίαν παροικιῶν*, "of the bishops of the several Gallic dioceses," wherein Irenæus, bishop of the metropolis of Lyons, was chief moderator. Bacchylus also, bishop of Corinth, (that was a metropolis too,) held a synod of the bishops of Achaia, (if St. Jerome[z] understand Eusebius aright,) and in their name wrote an epistle about this matter. This the author

[u] De Concord. l. vi. c. 1. n. 9.

[x] Epist. Dionys. Corinth. Episc. ap. Euseb. Hist Eccl. l. iv. c. 23.

[y] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 23.

[z] De Script. in Bacchyl. c. 44.

of the ancient Synodicon[a] calls a provincial synod, and expressly styles Bacchylus archbishop of Corinth. How oft does St. Cyprian[b] mention his province, and his fellow-bishops in it, to whom he communicated affairs of the church, and commanded (*mandavimus* is his own word) their help and assistance: and this province no mean one neither, as extending over Africa properly so called, Numidia, and the two Mauritanias.

Nor can I see any reason, with Salmasius,[c] to understand it of the civil province, especially when the best reason he gives is, that the power of primates or metropolitans was not yet in force, which is a plain and shameful begging of the question. Indeed, if he means it only of the title by which they were called, I grant that the word metropolitan is very rarely, if perhaps at all, to be found in any authentic writer before the time of the Nicene council: they were in those days styled *πρῶτοι ἐπίσκοποι*, and *κεφαλαὶ*, "the first bishops," and "the heads of provinces," (as is plain from the thirty-fourth apostolic canon,) i. e. they were *οἱ τῶν μητροπόλεων ἀρχιερεῖς*, "the chief bishops that resided in the several metropoles," as Zonaras truly expounds that canon. But whatever becomes of the title, the thing itself is plain to all that are not biassed by prejudice and partiality, that there was a superior bishop in every province, resident at the metropolis, who partly by himself, partly by the assistance of his provincial bishops meeting in council, usually managed all the more important church-affairs within that province.

The sum, in short, of this great Nicene canon amounts to this. That the greater limits of ecclesiastic jurisdiction were concurrent with the provinces of the Roman empire; that the prime governors within those bounds were the metropolitans; and though some were more honourable than others, by reason of the eminency of their episcopal stations, yet that every metropolitan had a free and independent power of ordination, and steering the main affairs of the church within that province: that the bishop of Rome had the same, and no more, within the Roman province; a power not granted by any immediate commission, or divine authority, but introduced for conveniency, and settled by custom and long continuance.

[a] A Pappo edit. p. 7.
[b] Vid. epist. xlv. ad Cornel. p. 87. et xlviii. p. 91.
[c] De primat. c. 4.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXTENT OF THE BISHOP OF ROME'S JURISDICTION, CONSIDERED AS A METROPOLITAN.

A search into the proper bounds of the Roman bishop. His power fourfold—episcopal, metropolitical, patriarchal, apostolical. The first not controverted. The last discharged as extravagant and groundless, and as frequently baffled, both by the reformed and Greek church. L. Alatius's jeer of his countrymen. His metropolitical jurisdiction considered as concurrent with that of the provost of Rome. That how great, and how far extending. The suburbicary regions, what. Sicily no part of the urbicary regions. The usual conformity between the extent of the civil and ecclesiastic jurisdiction in those times. The power of the Roman metropolitan confined within an hundred miles of Rome. Rufinus's exposition of the suburbicary churches. Greatly quarrelled at by the Romish writers. His authority in other cases allowed sufficient and unquestionable. His book approved by pope Gelasius and others. No probability of his being mistaken in the sense of the canon, or the extent of the Roman metropolitanship, or the suburbicary churches. His explication confirmed by most ancient interpreters of this canon. The bishops of Rome and Italy distinct. The bishop of Milan ranked with him of Rome. The objection of the bishop of Rome's being confined to so narrow a compass, considered and answered. The *majores diœceses* in the epistle of the synod of Arles, what. The bounds of the Roman bishops shewed to have been heretofore small from an ancient *Notitia Episcopatuum*. The fraud in the first publication of that *Notitia*. Morinus noted. The greatness of Rome equivalent to a large extent.

Thus far then we have gained, that the bishop of Rome, as well as the rest, was bounded within his metropolitical province; the council supposing this as the ground of its constitution, that the bishop of Alexandria should have jurisdiction over all within his province, as the bishop of Rome had in his. It is true, the council does not assign the proper limits of the Roman metropolitanship, as it does that of Alexandria, there being a more particular reason why it should specify the latter, that being the subject under debate, and the main, if not only occasion of the canon; we must therefore search it out some other way.

And here we are told[d] of a threefold power vested in the pope—episcopal, patriarchal, and apostolical; or, as others[e] distinguish a little more accurately, he may be considered under a fourfold capacity—as a bishop, as a metropolitan, as a patriarch,

[d] L. Allat. de Eccl. Occid. et Orient. consent. c. 8. n. 1. Filesac. de S. Episc. auctor. c. 9. sect. 3.

[e] Bellarm. de R. Pont. l. ii. c. 18. Aleand. de reg. suburb. par. ii. c. 4. Sirmond. Censur. p. ii. c. 5.

and lastly as pope, or as he is the vicar of Christ, and head of the universal church: in which capacity he is not only more honourable than all other bishops and patriarchs, but has full authority over them, to consecrate, confirm, or depose them, yea, when he pleases, to suppress old, and to erect new episcopal sees. Hereby (they tell us) he is constituted judge over all churches in the world, and may at pleasure visit, govern, and give laws to them. For the first of these, as he is a private bishop, we have no controversy with him; and for the last, his supreme and apostolical power over the whole Christian church, it is so wild and extravagant a claim, so groundless and precarious, so utter a stranger to scripture and primitive antiquity, that it is needless to take pains in the refuting of it. Nay, the popes themselves, how desirous soever to amplify their own power, have not yet dared to challenge it where they knew it would be disputed or denied. In the discourse that passed between Constantius and pope Liberius about the condemnation of Athanasius, the emperor asked him, *πόσον εἶ μέρος τῆς οἰκουμένης*;[f] "what great part of the world are you, that you only should take his part?" and that (as he urges a little before) when the whole world had passed sentence upon him. The proper answer to which (had Liberius known of any such power) had been this: I, only, am intrusted by Christ with supreme authority over the whole church; and I having acquitted him, it is no matter though the whole world besides has condemned him. And so, no doubt, he would have answered, had he been aware of any such prerogative affixed to his see. But popes had not then set this claim on foot, nor, is it like, dreamt of it; nor, if they had, was the world as yet disposed to receive it. Something we said to this before, when we considered the bishop of Rome as standing uppermost among the metropolitans mentioned in the Nicene canon. To add more were a vain and impertinent loss of time; especially after so much as has been said upon this argument, both by the writers of the Greek church, (Alexius Aristinus, Zonaras, Balsamon, Matthæus Blastares, Pet. Antiochenus, Macarius Ancyranus, Demetrius Chomatenus, Barlaam, Nilus Thessalonicensis, Nicetus Seidus, Nilus Doxopatrius, Geo. Coressius, Gabriel Philadelphensis, Maximus Margunius, Meletius Alexandrinus, &c., whom Leo Allatius,[g] in

[f] Ap. Theod. l. ii. c. 16.

[g] Ubi supra, c. 16. n. 2.

a scornful insultation over the deplorable state of his own country, is pleased to style *Græcanica ingenia*, "the wits of Greece,") and by them of the reformed religion, and by some too of their own church, by whom all pleas and pretences to this power have been so often and so shamefully baffled, that a man would wonder if at this time of the day they should be again rallied, and brought into open field. It remains then that we consider him in his metropolitical and patriarchal capacity.

II. And, first, we shall inquire what were the bounds of his metropolitical power.

And the best measures we can take in this matter will be to inquire into the extent of the civil jurisdiction of the provost of Rome, with which that that of the Roman prelate must run parallel, no man can doubt, that considers the course of things in those times, when in this respect the church and the state went so fairly hand in hand: a thing not only affirmed by protestants, but granted by the most learned and zealous writers of the church of Rome. Let us therefore consider, first, how the case stood in the civil state.

The prefect of Rome was an officer of great antiquity, instituted in the very infancy of that state, while governed by kings, but being only of a *pro tempore* use, was never made fixed and ordinary, till Augustus, who, being much engaged in foreign wars, appointed a magistrate, who might in the interim supply his room, manage his affairs, and administer justice at home. His public appearances were very pompous and stately, and he had several great officers under him, as may be seen in the *Notitia Imperii*. The greatest persons in the city were not exempt from his power; for calling five persons of the senatorian order to his assistance, he might try and pass sentence upon the head of a senator himself. His government extended not only to Rome, but to an hundred miles round about it, where the limits of his jurisdiction ceased, as is expressly said in a rescript of the emperor Severus:[h] *Ditioni suæ non solum Roma commissa (quamvis in illa contineantur universa) verum etiam intra centesimum miliarium potestatem te protendere, antiqua jura voluerunt*, as his patent runs in Cassiodore.[i]

[h] Ap. Ulp. de offic. præf. urb. l. i. ff. sect. 4. lib. i. tit. xii. et collat. Ll. Mosac. tit. xiv. de plag.

[i] Form. l. v. p. 207.

Within this compass were several countries, which, partly from their lying round about, partly from their subjection to and dependance upon the prefecture of Rome, were usually styled *Urbicariæ*[k] and *Suburbicariæ*,[l] and *Suburbanæ Regiones*,[m] sometimes also *Regiones solitæ*,[n] the countries within which the governor of Rome was wont to exercise his solemn jurisdiction, and *Vicinæ Regiones*,[o] countries that lie next to the city. And these, I doubt not, are those four regions mentioned in a law[p] of Constantine M. directed to Orfitus, prefect of the city.

III. This circumference Salmasius conceives[q] (though herein stiffly opposed by his learned antagonist) to be the *Romana regio* mentioned in an old inscription at Nola, and by the historian (as he corrects him out of an ancient manuscript[r]) in the Life of Probus, where it is opposed to Verona, Benacum, and other regions of Italy; and that this was the *χωρίον τῶν Ῥωμαίων*, "the region of the Romans," spoken of by Ignatius in the front of his epistle to that church. What these four regions were, mentioned in the law of Constantine, is not agreed by those that have searched furthest into this matter. Gothofred[s] makes them to have been *Tuscia Suburbicaria* (another part of it being called *Annonaria*) *Picenum Suburbicarium*, (to distinguish it from the *Annonarium*,) and of these there is no doubt: the other two he makes to be *Latium Vetus*, and *Latium Novum*, lying south of Rome, and extending as far as Sinuessa upon the river Safo, which divided between Latium and Campania. Salmasius[t] will have the *Latium Vetus* and *Novum* to have been but one and the same, and which was afterwards called *Campania Latina;* and to fill up the number, substitutes the province of Valeria, so called from the Valerian Way, that lay through it. Another French lawyer,[u] who takes upon him, in less than half a sheet of paper, (which he published on purpose,) to state the

[k] Cod. Theodos. lib. ix. tit. xxx. l. 3. lib. xi. tit. iii. l. 3. tit. xvi. l. 9.

[l] Ibid. lib. xi. tit. i. l. 9. tit. xvi. l. 12. tit. xxviii. l. 12.

[m] Ibid. lib. ix. tit. i. l. 19.

[n] Ulp. ubi supr. s. 13.

[o] Cod. Theodos. lib. xiv. tit. x. l. 4.

[p] Ibid. lib. xiv. tit. vi. l. 1.

[q] Epist. ad Amic. p. 4. Euchar. p. i. c. 1. p. 7. p. ii. c. 1. p. 249.

[r] Euchar. ibid. p. 11. et not. Salm. in vit. Probi.

[s] Conjectur. de region. suburb. c. 5. p. 27. 30, 31. et com. ad Cod. Theodos. lib. xiv. tit. vi. l. 1.

[t] Epist. cit. p. 23, 24. Eucharist. i. c. 5.

[u] Jo. Lechasser. observat. de Eccles. Suburb. p. 4, 5.

controversy, will have five of the eleven regions (into which Pliny tells us Augustus the emperor divided Italy) to belong to this, viz. the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh, as those that lay next the city, and were bounded with the rivers Tifernus and Silarus on the east, and Marca and Crustuminum on the west. But herein he offers no other evidence than his own conjecture. Sirmondus[x] (and others after him) extends the number of the suburbicary countries to ten, which he makes the same with the ten provinces that were under the *vicarius urbicus*, and to have thence taken their denomination.

But there are two things, amongst many others, that lie strongly in prejudice of that opinion, and with me turn the scales. First, that some of these ten provinces, especially the three islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, lay too remote to come under the notion of suburbicary regions: for *urbicarium* and *suburbicarium*, *suburbanum* and *suburbicum*, all importing the same thing, (as the learned Jerome Aleander[y] readily grants,) must necessarily imply their lying within some tolerable neighbourhood to the city. Secondly, that Sicily, one of the ten provinces belonging to the *vicarius urbicus*, is most expressly distinguished from the urbicary regions,[z] and as equally as it is from Italy, strictly so called, that is, the seven provinces that constituted the Italic diocese: a case so clear, that Sirmond,[a] though he endeavours to say something to it, yet it is so thin and trifling, that it rather shews he had a good mind to answer it, than that his answer would ever hold water. Others[b] are willing to suggest, as if in that law of Constantius, Illyricum ought to be read instead of Sicily: but this is thrown in only as a conjecture, and that too against all reason, Illyricum belonging at that time to another jurisdiction. For by the famous distribution[c] which Constantine the Great made of the parts and offices of the empire, Illyricum was under a prætorian prefect of its own, and so, I suppose, continued all the time of Constantius, (in the latter part of whose reign this law was made,) though afterwards a great part of it was laid to the command of the prætorian prefect of Italy. But Morinus,[d] like a young and daring champion

[x] Censur. Conject. l. i. c. 4. p. 23. Advent. p. i. c. 3. p. 31.
[y] Refut. Conject. p. i. c. 3. p. 26.
[z] Cod Theodos. lib. xi. tit. xvi. l. 9.
[a] Censur Conject. l. i. c. 6. p. 38. vid. Advent. p. i. c. 3. p. 36.
[b] Aleand. ubi supr. c. 2. p. 23.
[c] Vid. Zosim. Hist. l. ii. p. 688.
[d] Exercit. Eccles. l. i. c. 30.

that was resolved to do the work, is for quite dashing it out of the body of the law, as a word contrary to the usage of that time. All which shuffling artifices are a shrewd sign it was a bad cause they had to manage.

In short, though men of learning may by tricks and subtilty entangle and perplex an argument, (as they have done in this controversy,) yet two things are plain beyond all just exception. First, that the jurisdiction of the city-prefect reached an hundred miles about Rome. Secondly, that the urbicary and suburbicary regions lay chiefly, and, in all likelihood, entirely within that compass, and derived that title from their vicinity to the city, and their immediate dependance upon the government of its provost. And I cannot but a little wonder that Sirmond, who more than once grants[e] the prefect of Rome to have had jurisdiction within an hundred miles, should yet as often deny[f] that he had any provinces under his government, as if there had been no provinces within that compass, when they are expressly called the *Suburbanæ Provinciæ* in the Theodosian Code;[g] and the ordinary judges in those parts commanded to return all greater causes to the tribunal of the city-prefect, and this in contradistinction to the course of other provinces, which were to be accountable to the prætorian prefect.

IV. Having thus found out the jurisdiction of the Roman prefect, it should, one would think, be no hard matter to discover that of the bishop of Rome, there being so known a correspondence between the civil and ecclesiastical government of those days. And though this did not always, nor universally take place, (and how should it, when time and the will of princes made such alterations in the bounds of places and provinces?) yet did it generally obtain: a thing introduced at first for greater conveniency, founded upon long custom, and settled by several laws and canons of the church; insomuch that if a change or alteration had been, or should hereafter be made by imperial authority in any city, that then the order of episcopal sees should follow the civil and political forms, as is expressly provided by two general councils, the one of Chalcedon,[h] the other of Constantinople.[i] Nor can any reason be given, why the bishop of Alexandria should exercise a pastoral authority over three such

[e] Censur. Conject. l. i. c. 1. p. 9. Advent. p. i. c. 1. p. 7.
[f] Censur. l. i. c. 1. p. 12. Propemp. l. i. c. 7. p. 87.
[g] Lib. ix. tit. i. l. 13.
[h] Conc. Chalc. can. 17.
[i] Conc. Const. in Trull. c. 38.

large provinces, as Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, but only because they were under the civil government of the *præfectus augustalis*, "the imperial viceroy," who kept his residence in that city. The jurisdiction then of the bishop of Rome, being of equal circumference with that of the Roman provost, must extend to all the city-provinces that lay within an hundred miles round about it.

Accordingly we find, that when great disturbances were made in the church of Rome by the Manichees, and other heretics and schismatics, Valentinian the Third writes to Faustus,[j] prefect of Rome, to expel them all out of the city; but especially to proceed against those who separated themselves from the communion of the venerable pope, and whose schism did infect the people; commanding him, that if upon warning given they should not within twenty days reconcile themselves, he should banish them one hundred miles out of the city; that so they might be punished with their self-chosen solitude and separation: the emperor thinking it but just, that they who had voluntarily rejected, should be themselves cast out of the bounds of his jurisdiction; that they who had perverted many in the capital city, should not be left within any part of his diocese to infect the people. And this was done in compliance with the course observed in civil cases, where notorious malefactors were so used. Thus Symmachus[k] the Gentile was for his insolence banished an hundred miles out of Rome. And some ages before that, Severus having cashiered the soldiers that murdered the emperor Pertinax, banished them,[l] and charged them, at the peril of their heads, not to come within an hundred miles of Rome, that is, within the limits of the city prefecture. And more plainly yet, in the case of Ursicinus, who had raised infinite stirs at Rome about the choice of pope Damasus, and had set up himself as competitor in that election, for which he had been banished into France, Valentinian the Elder afterwards (as appears by his rescript[m] directed to Ampelius, the city-provost) gave him and his companions leave to return into Italy, provided they came not to Rome, nor any place within the suburbicary regions, that is, within the jurisdiction of the Roman bishop.

[j] Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. v. l. 62.
[k] Prosp. de promiss. div. p. iii. prom. 38. p. 60.
[l] Herodian. Hist. l. ii. p. 97.
[m] Ext. ap. Baron. ad Ann. 371. vid. item Rescr. ad Maxim. V. V. ibid.

But Rufinus has put the case beyond all question, who, in his short paraphrase (for for a translation we may be sure he never intended it) of the sixth Nicene canon, tells us,[n] that, according to ancient custom, as he of Alexandria had in Egypt, so the bishop of Rome had the care and charge of the suburbicary churches. The champions of the Roman church finding themselves sorely pinched with this authority, have no other way to relieve themselves, but to throw it quite off their necks, and to fall foul upon Rufinus, loading him with all the hard names and characters of reproach, charging him with malice, falsehood, ignorance, want of learning, and indeed what not. But the world is not now to be taught that Rufinus was a man of parts and learning, witness the reputation which his works had of old, and still have to this day. Pope Gelasius, with his synod of seventy bishops, allowed them,[o] (the case only of free-will excepted;) and among the rest his Ecclesiastical History, wherein this very Nicene canon is extant; and gives him too the title of a religious man into the bargain. So that Rufinus's exposition has the pope's own approbation on its side. And surely, if ever his judgment be infallible, it is when he has his council about him to advise and assist him. And though, perhaps, that Gelasian synod, if searched into, may not be of that authentic credit, as to lay any considerable stress upon it; yet, however, it stands good against them that own its authority, and thereby approve its determination. And though it had not given this testimony to Rufinus, yet there wants not other evidence that the thing was so. Accordingly, Hincmar of Rheims, speaking of this very book of Rufinus whence this passage is taken, assures us,[p] it was one of those that were received in the catalogue of the apostolic see. Nay, his Ecclesiastical History obtained such credit, that it was wont solemnly to be appealed to by fathers and councils, in some of the most weighty and important cases of the church.[q]

V. Nor is there any shadow of probability, that he should be mistaken either in the sense of the Nicene canon, or in the province of the bishop of Rome. He was himself an Italian, born not above twenty years after the synod of Nice; baptized, and

[n] Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 6.
[o] Distinct. xv. c. 3. Sancta Romana, p. m. 34.
[p] Adv. Hincm. Laud. cap. 21. p. 100.
[q] Vid. Conc. Nic. ii. act. 1. Cyril. Epist. ad. PP. Afric. Conc. vol. ii. col. 1143.

perhaps born, at Aquileia, a famous city of Friuli, (honoured heretofore with the residence of Augustus and some other emperors, and made afterwards a metropolis, and the seat of the prætorian prefect,) and himself a presbyter of that church: he had been frequently conversant at Rome, had travelled over most parts of the Christian world, and had conversed with persons of the greatest note and eminency in every place: in all which respects he could no more mistake the jurisdiction of the see of Rome, than we can suppose that a prebend of York, born and bred in the church of England, should be ignorant how far the province of Canterbury does extend. Nor can there be the least reason to imagine, either that by suburbicary churches Rufinus should mean any other than what lay within those provinces that were universally known by that title, or that he should dare so openly, and in the face of the world, to shut up the bishop of Rome within those suburbicary regions, had not his power at the time of the Nicene council (whose canon he must in all reason be supposed to explain, as things stood at the time of that synod) been notoriously known to have been confined within those limits.

But what need we take pains to vindicate the credit of our witness? he stands not alone in this matter, his testimony being sufficiently justified by concurrent evidence. The ancient version of the Nicene canons, (published by Sirmond,[r] out of the records of the Vatican, and another exactly agreeing with it by Mons. Justell, from a very ancient manuscript,) the author whereof was perhaps not much later than Rufinus, renders it by *suburbicaria loca*, the "suburbicary places:" the three Arabic versions, the Alexandrian, that of the Melchites, and the Paraphrase of Joseph the Egyptian, all express it to the same effect; that "he should have power over his countries and provinces, and whatever lay next to him:" Alex. Aristenus, and Sim. Logotheta, two Greek canonists, and a third ancient epitomiser of the canons, mentioned by Leo Allatius,[s] by τῶν ὑπὸ Ῥώμην, "the places and provinces that lay under Rome," i. e. the suburbicary countries.

Nor will it a little contribute to the further clearing of this matter, to observe, that as the civil government of the Roman provost is distinguished from that of Italy in the writings of

[r] Censur. par. ii. c. 4.

[s] De Eccl. Occid. et Orient. consens. l. i. c. 12. s. 4.

those times, so is this of the Roman prelate; and this distinction very ancient. When Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, refused to give Domnus possession of that church, an appeal was made to the emperor Aurelian, who referred the decision of the case to the bishops of Italy and of Rome, as Eusebius tells us:[t] and in the title of the letter written by the Sardican synod to the church of Alexandria, it is said, that the bishops assembled from Rome and Italy,[u] i. e. Italy taken in its strict and peculiar notion, as it is there distinguished from Campania, Calabria, &c. Thence Milan, as being head of the Italic diocese, is, in an ecclesiastic sense, called the metropolis of Italy,[x] and Dionysius, bishop of that church, styled bishop of the metropolis of Italy;[y] and Sulpitius Severus, speaking of Priscilian and his company coming into Italy, says,[z] they addressed themselves to Damasus bishop of Rome, and Ambrose of Milan, as bishops that had the greatest authority in those days: and in this respect, in the civil sense, Berterius[a] truly makes Rome to be the metropolis of the suburbicary regions, as Milan was of the rest of Italy.

VI. But it seems no small prejudice to the great men of that church, that so venerable a person as the bishop of Rome should be pent up within such narrow limits, much inferior to many others, especially him of Alexandria or Antioch. But besides that the Eastern dioceses (as some think) were generally larger than those of the West, the ecclesiastic provinces (as we noted before) were restrained to the form of the civil constitution, and were more or fewer, as it happened in the political distribution: wherein if the Roman bishop had not so large an extent as some others, yet was it made up in the number and frequency of episcopal sees, beyond what was in all those times in other places of the like extent. And, therefore, when the synod at Arles, in their letter to pope Sylvester,[b] say, that he did *majores diœceses tenere*, (a passage frequently quoted by the writers of the Roman church,) "possess greater dioceses," besides that the place, as Salmasius observes,[c] is very corrupt, and affords no current sense, it is plain that the word "diocese" there cannot be understood of patriarchal dioceses, (Constantine not having yet made the di-

[t] Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 30.
[x] Ap. Ath. ibid.
[z] Sac. Hist. l. ii. p. 169.
[b] Ext. Conc. vol. i. col. 1429. ed. Sirm.
[u] Ap. Athan. Apol. ii. s. 13. vid. ad solitar. s. 9.
[y] Ap. Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. ii. c. 15.
[a] Pithan. par. i. c. 3.
[c] De Primat. c. ult.

vision of the empire, nor dioceses come up in a civil, much less in an ecclesiastical sense,) and must therefore be meant of single bishoprics, in the modern use of the word, and which was not unusual in those days, as is evident from the code of the African church, and the conference between the Catholics and Donatists at Carthage, where nothing is more common and obvious than this usage of the word "diocese," for a single episcopal see: the places are too numerous to be reckoned up.[d] And thus also pope Leo uses the word,[e] in the case of Restitutus, an African bishop.

VII. And, indeed, that the bounds of the church of Rome for several ages after the Nicene council were much narrower than some others, appears from an old Greek *Notitia Episcopatuum*, wherein the five patriarchates are distinctly reckoned up, with all the provinces and bishoprics contained under them: where under him of Rome, are set down no more than six provinces, (whereof the ἐπαρχία οὐρβικαρίας Ῥώμης, "the province of of urbicary Rome," is the first,) containing not above one hundred and eight episcopal sees; a number far inferior to the rest, especially the patriarch of Constantinople, who had subject to him thirty-three provinces, and in them three hundred and eighty-nine bishoprics, besides some others then newly added to him. This *Notitia* had been heretofore published by Carolus a St. Paulo, in his *Geographia Sacra*, but when he came to that part of it that concerns the diocese of Rome, he quite leaps over it, pretending the manuscript copy to be imperfect, and that the words were so corrupted, that scarce any one remained entire; leaving somewhat more than a bare suspicion, that he himself, or some before him, had purposely rased the manuscript, lest the nakedness of the country, the thinness and smallness of the Roman diocese, in comparison of others, should be discovered. But, to their great confusion, it has been lately published entire and perfect out of the Oxford library,[f] where the account that we have given is plain and notorious; all which considered, with how little reason and pretence to truth does Morinus[g] appeal to

[d] Vid. Cod. Can. Eccl. Afric. Can. 53. 56. 71. 93. 98, 99. 117, 118, 119. 123. et in collat. Carthag. passim.

[e] Epist. lxxxvii. c. 2.

[f] A Bevereg. inter Annot. ad Can. 36. Conc. vi. in Trull.

[g] Exerc. Eccl. l. i. exercit. xxx. p. 250.

the ecclesiastic Notitias, even such as were made long after the times of Constantine, to prove the amplitude of the Roman province, as to the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome. But to return: there can be no reason to expect, that the ecclesiastic limits in those days should be larger than those of the state, which were the standard and measure by which the others were ordinarily regulated. Nor is the greatness of any jurisdiction so much to be measured by the largeness of its extent, as by the honour and authority of the place where it is exercised; as that of the lord mayor of London, though reaching no further than the liberties of the city, (which take not in half the suburbs,) is yet a more honourable authority than that of the sheriff of the largest county in England. In this regard, the bishop of Rome had, though a shorter cut, a better and more noble jurisdiction than any other prelate in the world besides: Rome being the seat of majesty and power, the residence of the emperors, the highest court of justice, the place to which all parts paid either homage, or at least respect and veneration, honoured with the title of Rome the Great; the provost whereof was reckoned next in honour to the emperor,[i] and upon all occasions went equal in dignity to the prætorian prefect, who yet commanded ten times as many provinces: he had the precedence of all the great officers of Rome,[k] and to him belonged *civilium rerum summa*,[l] "the management of all civil affairs." Hence the title given to Sylvester is that of "bishop of the imperial city;"[m] and the council of Chalcedon tells us,[n] that the fathers therefore gave a prerogative to the see of Rome, *διὰ τὸ βασιλεύειν τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην*, "because that was the governing and imperial city;" and Constantius the emperor, though he had already condemned and deposed Athanasius, did yet, to put the better colour upon it, desire to have it ratified by the authority enjoyed by the bishops of the eternal city, as the heathen historian has remarked.[o] And thus

[i] "Adoratum populo caput, et crepat ingens Sejanus: deinde ex facie toto orbe secunda," &c. Juvenal. Sat. x. ver. 62. orbe, &c.] "quia præfectus urbi fuit venerabilis, secundus a Cæsare Tiberio." Vet. Scholiast. ibid. "Erebuit tanto spoliare ministro Imperium fortuna tnum: stat proxima cervix Ponderis immensi." P. Stat. Sylv. l. i. c. 4. ver. 5. de Rut. Gallico. P. V. Vid. Gothofred. conjectur. dissert. i. c. 1. ii. c. 5. et J. Dartis. de Reg. Suburb. par. i. c. 16. p. 147.

[k] Cod. Theodos. lib. i. tit. xxviii. l. 3. Symmach. l. x. epist. 36.

[l] Id. ib. epist. 30.

[m] Ap. Euseb. de Vit. Const. l. iii. c. 7.

[n] Can. 28.

[o] Am. Marcell. Hist. l. xv. c. 13.

much may serve for the metropolitical bounds of the Roman prelate.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE RISE AND ORIGINAL OF PATRIARCHS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

An inquiry into the rise and original of patriarchs in general. None before the council of Nice. What that council contributed to them. Civil dioceses, when and by whom introduced. These gave start to primary metropolitans. Dioceses, when first brought into the church. The title of patriarch borrowed from the Jews. Who their patriarchs, and whence descended. Exarchs, what. The word patriarch, when first used by church-writers in a strict and proper sense. The patriarchs among the Montanists, who. A short survey of the four great patriarchates. The extent of the patriarchate of Alexandria. The *Diœcesis Ægyptiaca*, what. The patriarchal jurisdiction, in what sense larger than that of the Augustal prefect. Little gained to this patriarchate more than a title of honour. The patriarchate of Antioch commensurate to the Eastern diocese. The contest about Cyprus, how determined. Palestine for some time under Antioch. The patriarchship of Constantinople, by what degrees it rose. What privilege conferred upon it by the second general council. The bishops henceforwards exercising a kind of patriarchal power over the churches of the neighbouring provinces. The power granted to that see by the council of Chalcedon. Its ninth, seventeenth, and eight and twentieth canons considered to that purpose. Jurisdiction over the three dioceses of Asiana, Pontica, and Thrace. This settled, upon a full debate and discussion of the matter. This power owned by the synod to have been exercised of a long time before. This grant urged against the universal supremacy of the see of Rome. The extent of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate in after-times manifested from several ancient *Notitiæ*. The patriarchate of Jerusalem. The honour confirmed to this church by the Nicene council. Its subjection to the see of Cæsarea. When first attempting a metropolitical power. The contest between this bishop and the bishop of Antioch. How determined in the council of Chalcedon. When first styled patriarch. The extent of this patriarchate.

Proceed we, in the second place, to consider him as a patriarch, the highest degree of ecclesiastic government which the church ever owned: and in order to the better clearing the whole matter, it will be of some advantage, and perhaps not unpleasant to the reader, to inquire briefly into the rise and original of patriarchs in general, and then survey each particular patriarchate. The rise of patriarchs is but obscurely delivered in the records of the church, the thing not being particularly and by name taken notice of, till, like a river that has run a great way, and gathered many tributary rivulets, it had swelled itself into a considerable stream.

That there were none at the time of the Nicene council, we shewed before; the chief church-governors then being the metropolitans, some of which soon after set up for more room, and began to enlarge the bounds of their jurisdiction: and two things there were greatly contributed to that attempt. First, the mighty reputation which the synod of Nice had given to metropolitans, and especially to the particular sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch: this inspired them with an ambitious affectation of extending their superiority and jurisdiction, and prepared the way among their brethren for the easier reception of it. Socrates observed,[p] that, long before his time, (ἤδη πάλαι, which must reach as far as the council of Nice, at least,) the bishop of Rome (as he also of Alexandria) had gone beyond the bounds of his place, and had aspired ἐπὶ δυναστείαν, "to a power and dominion over his brethren:" a remark so very clear and plain, (especially as to the bishop of Rome,) that nothing is more obvious in the whole history of the church.

The synod of Nice was beholden by all with a just regard and veneration, and its decrees received as oracles from heaven; and the Christian world, finding what particular care it had taken of those three great sees, were the more ready to submit and strike sail to their usurpations. Hence the following popes, but especially Leo the First, do upon all occasions magnify the Nicene canons, and amplify their meaning beyond what was at first intended by them. Secondly, the late division of the empire, and the alteration of it from that form whereinto it had been cast, first by Augustus, and afterwards by the emperor Adrian, new modelled by Constantine the Great much about the time of the Nicene council, gave a singular advantage and opportunity to promote and further this design.

II. For Constantine introduced four prætorian prefectures, each prefecture containing several dioceses, (thirteen in all,) and each diocese comprehending several provinces; the vicar, or civil lieutenant, residing in the metropolis of every diocese, and presiding over all the provinces within that division: and how easy was it, the world being so prepared and disposed, and the church so readily embracing the forms of the civil state, for the chief metropolitan of every diocese to set up for himself. The dignity of the city where he resided, and the resort of people thither

[p] Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 11.

for the despatch of business, made him at first be esteemed and honoured as the first bishop of the diocese; and this, in a little time, brought on the privilege of ordaining the metropolitans of the several provinces, and to be intrusted with almost the same powers over metropolitans, which they had over provincial bishops.

And, no doubt, it made persons more willing to comply with such a model, that having frequent occasion of repairing to the metropolis, (as is intimated in the ninth canon of Antioch,) they might with the greater conveniency despatch their civil and ecclesiastical affairs both at once. It served not a little to help on this business, that the second general council gave the bishop of Constantinople the next place of honour to him of Rome, upon the account of its being the imperial city; which gave no small encouragement to the bishops of all diocesan metropoles to attempt the extending their superiority equal to that of the imperial governor that kept his residence in that city. But that which puts the case past dispute is, that that council took in the form of civil dioceses into the church, at least approved what was already taken in: for so they provide,[q] that bishops should not go beyond the diocese to meddle in churches that were without their bounds.

Socrates,[r] giving an account of this canon, says expressly, that the fathers of the synod, having made division of the provinces, constituted patriarchs: and though, perhaps, by "patriarchs," Socrates means no more than those *pro-tempore* commissioners who were within such and such places appointed to judge who should be received to catholic communion, (as we have elsewhere observed,[s]) yet very plain it is, that the council there intends "diocese" properly, and in an ecclesiastic sense, and therefore opposes it to "province;" ordaining that bishops should not ordinarily go out of the diocese to celebrate ordinations, or any other church-offices: and that the canon concerning dioceses being observed, the synod in every province should manage the affairs of it according to the Nicene constitution. And in the sixth canon they speak yet more expressly: that if any take upon him to accuse a bishop, he shall first exhibit and prosecute his charge before the provincial synod; and in case they cannot end it, that then the ac-

[q] Concil. Constant. Can. 11.

[r] Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 8.

[s] Life of Greg. Nazianz. sect. v. n. 8.

cusers shall apply themselves *μείζονι συνόδῳ τῶν τῆς διοικήσεως ἐπισκόπων ἐκείνης*, "to the greater synod of the bishops of that diocese," who shall be assembled for that purpose: and if any, slighting the bishops of the diocese, shall sue to the emperor, or the secular tribunals, or to a general council, he shall not in any wise be admitted to exhibit an accusation, but be rejected as a violator of the canons, and a disturber of ecclesiastic order. And, to name no more in a case so evident, pope Innocent,[t] in a letter written about the year 408, says of the church of Antioch, that its authority reached not over a single province, but over a diocese; though, withal, he falsely makes it to have been so settled by the synod of Nice. Nay, long before all this, we meet with ecclesiastic dioceses in this sense: for by a law of the emperor Gratian,[u] bearing date May the 17th, anno 376, it is provided, that the same customs that were in use in civil judicatures, should obtain in church matters, and the final decision and determination of ecclesiastic causes should be made in their proper places, and by the synod of every diocese. And this course the emperor insinuates, as that which was not then first introduced.

III. From all this it appears, that, according to the political constitution, diocesan, or, as it was after called, patriarchal, jurisdiction was brought into the church; and that, accordingly, the bishops of some of those cities, who had hitherto been but metropolitans, advanced into the title and dignity of primates, (which was the word that generally obtained in the Western parts, the word "patriarch" being late, and little used in the Western church,) extending their superintendency commensurate to the jurisdiction of the vicar of the diocese. And because some of these metropoles were cities of far greater eminency and account than others, as Rome, Alexandria, &c., therefore the bishops of them were (in the East especially) honoured with the title of patriarchs; differing at first from other primates, not so much in power, as in dignity and honour, they were *diversorum nominum, sed ejusdem officii*, as Gratian notes.[x] That this title of patriarch was borrowed from the Jews, there can be no doubt. Upon the final destruction of their church and state, they were dispersed into several countries, especially in the Eastern parts, where not being capable of continuing their Levitical polity

[t] Epist. xviii. non longe ab init.

[u] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. ii. l. 23.

[x] Distinct. xcix. p. 302.

exactly according to the Mosaic institution, they constituted some persons to exercise the chief authority among that people, who kept their residence in some of the greater cities, as at Babylon, Alexandria, Tiberias, and afterwards probably at Jerusalem: the persons thus made choice of, are thought to have been of the tribe of Judah, and more particularly to have descended from the line of David. Epiphanius[y] seems to make them (at least them of Tiberias) to have been the posterity of Gamaliel, the great counsellor spoken of in the Acts. But Theodoret has a more peculiar fancy,[z] that they were the descendants of Herod the Great, who was by his father's side an Ascalonite, by his mother's, an Idumæan: but however descended, they were intrusted with the chief power and government over the Jews within their particular jurisdictions. These are they who are so often called ראש גלות, "the heads of the exiles," and otherwhiles princes, and frequently patriarchs, (though, besides these supreme, it seems probable, from some of the imperial laws, that they had an inferior sort of patriarchs, who were but just superior to their presbyters, or elders;) of these Jewish patriarchs there is frequent mention both in Jewish[a] and Christian writers,[b] and especially in the Theodosian Code:[c] whence also it is evident, that this office and title ceased, or rather was abolished by the imperial authority, not long before the year 429,[d] in the time of the younger Theodosius: but though it be plain whence this title was derived, yet when it first sprung up in the Christian church, it is hard to say. In the canons of the Chalcedon council[e] he is called "exarch of the diocese;" and any bishop or clergyman that has a controversy with his own metropolitan, is allowed to appeal to him, (the word ἔξαρχος indifferently notes any chief person in place or power, and the sense of it is to be determined according to the circumstances of the case: thus the canons[f] mention both "exarch of the province," and "exarch of the diocese;" the first denoting a metropolitan, the second a patriarch.) But

[y] Hæres. xxx. s. 5.

[z] Dial. i. vol. iv. p. 22.

[a] Seder Olam, R. Abraham, R. Dav. Ganz. in Zemach, David. Benjamin in itin, etc.

[b] Epiph. Hæres. xxx. ubi supra. Cyril. Catech. xii. s. 11. Hieron. Comm. in Esa. c. 3. et alibi. Chrysost. adv. Jud. l. iv. s. 17. et de hisce intelligendus est locus in Epistola Hadriani ap. Vopisc. in Saturnino, p. 960.

[c] Lib. xvi. tit. viii. de Judæis. l. i. 2. 8. 11. 13, 14, 15. 17. 22. 29.

[d] Vid. C. Th. ubi supr. l. xxix. et Theod. loc. supr. citat.

[e] Can. 9. et 17.

[f] Conc. Sard. Can. 6.

in the Acts of that council[g] we are told of ὁσιώτατοι πατριάρχαι διοικήσεως ἑκάστης, "the most holy patriarchs of every diocese;" and in the several libels exhibited against Dioscurus,[h] pope Leo is entitled Patriarch of Great Rome. And that this title was not then newly taken up, we are assured from the letters[i] of Theodosius and his empress Placidia, about calling the third general council, holden at Ephesus, anno 431, in both which Leo is styled "the most reverend patriarch." This is the first time that I remember to have met with a patriarch strictly so called, unless we will understand the passage of Socrates I mentioned concerning patriarchs in a proper sense.

IV. Indeed, the Montanists, or Cataphrygians, who started up under the reign of the emperor Antoninus, had their patriarchs. They had three orders of church-officers,[k] patriarchs, cenones, and bishops. But besides that they were an odd and absurd sect, whom the catholic church always disowned, it is not easy to guess what they meant by patriarchs, whom they plainly make distinct from bishops. They were, it seems, their prime ecclesiastic governors, the chief whereof resided probably at Pepuza in Phrygia, which they fantastically called Jerusalem,[l] affirming it to be the "New Jerusalem that came down out of heaven," and this, it is like, in imitation of the Jewish high-priest; for from the Judaical constitution they borrowed many of their devices, and perhaps might borrow the very name as well as thing from them, the prime church-officer among the Jews, after the destruction of the temple and the abrogation of that polity, being styled patriarch, as we noted before. But it may be doubted, whether the Montanists had those three orders from the beginning of their sect, it being taken notice of by none elder than St. Jerome, nor, that I know of, mentioned by any other ancient writer after him. However, it is certain, that in the common use of the word, it occurs not till the time of pope Leo, and the Ephesine and Chalcedon councils. After that, the title became fixed, and nothing more common than the word patriarch, and θρόνοι πατριαρχικοὶ, "patriarchal sees," in the writings of the church. What, and how many, these particular

[g] Conc. Chal. Act. ii. [h] Ibid. Act. iii. [i] Ext. ibid.

[k] Hieron. Epist. ad Marcellam. "Habent primos de Pepusa Phrygiæ patriarchas. Secundos, quos," etc.

[l] Vid. Apollon. ap. Euseb. l. v. c. 18. et 16.

sees were, we are told by the sixth council in Trullo,[m] where they are particularly enumerated, and their order and precedency adjusted in this manner—Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem. From hence, then, we descend to survey these particular patriarchates; not designing to meddle with secondary and later patriarchates, such as that of Aquileia, Grado, Russia, the patriarchs of the Maronites, Jacobites, Armenians, the catholic or patriarch of Bagdad or Mauzel, and the like: our business now is with the five ancient and eminent patriarchships; and, though first in order, we shall reserve that of Rome to be treated of in the last place, intending to discourse more fully concerning it.

V. We begin with the patriarch of Alexandria, (for I shall take them in order, as I conceive they grew up in time,) who seems to have gained little by his new patriarchship besides the honour of the title, whether we consider him in point of precedency, in point of power, or in the extent of his jurisdiction; nay, in some respects he was a loser rather than a gainer by it. In point of precedency, he was before the second metropolitan in the whole Christian world, whereas now he was thrust down into the third place. In point of power, he was, before this change, sole metropolitan of those parts, and the ordination of his suffragan bishops entirely belonged to him, or depended upon his consent and confirmation; which now, according to the constitution of church-polity, must be devolved upon the several metropolitans under him: nor was he much advanced in the extent of his jurisdiction.

It is true, the *Diœcesis Ægyptiaca* consisted of six large provinces, all under the government of the Augustal prefect, who constantly resided at Alexandria, (and consequently in spirituals belonged to the patriarch of that place:) these, in the *Notitia Imperii*,[n] we find thus reckoned up; Libya Superior, Libya Inferior, Thebais, Ægyptus, Arcadia, Augustanica. Whereas in the Nicene canon, the Alexandrian metropolitanship is said to extend but over three—Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis. But when it is considered, that Thebais, Arcadia, and Augustanica, were of old parts of, and lay hid under the more general name of Egypt, and that Pentapolis was the same with the Upper Libya, the account will be much the same.

[m] Can. 35.

[n] Can. 116. ubi vid. comment. Panciroll.

We find, in the council of Nice,[o] that the bishop of Alexandria was appointed to give an account of those synodal transactions to the churches throughout all Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, and the neighbouring countries as far as the provinces of India: where the *Αἴγυπτος πᾶσα*, or "whole Egypt," (in opposition to the other two, which were but single provinces,) takes in Egypt strictly so called, Thebais, Arcadia, and Augustanica; and by the neighbouring regions that lay as far as India, are doubtless meant the frontier countries that bordered upon the Roman provinces, and were perhaps confederate with the empire; and wherein, it is like, the bishops of Alexandria had propagated Christianity, (as we know Athanasius did in India,) whose churches therefore owned a dependance upon the see of Alexandria. And in this respect I grant the bishop had somewhat a larger jurisdiction than the Augustal prefect, though otherwise they were the same.

Upon the erection of this see into a patriarchate, several metropolitans start up: ten of the metropolitans of his diocese, the emperor Theodosius[p] commanded Dioscorus to bring along with him to the council of Ephesus. How many more he had is not certain. Nilus Doxopatrius, in his *Notitia*,[q] says there were thirteen; the old Greek *Notitia*, we mentioned before,[r] reckons ten provinces, and in them ninety-nine bishoprics, which surely argues that a miserable desolation had laid waste those countries, and reduced the number of episcopal sees. Seeing, before the time of the Nicene council, there met in synod near an hundred bishops out of Egypt and Libya,[s] whom Alexander had summoned to the condemnation of Arius. And that so so many there were, Athanasius expressly tells us more than once.[t] And how greatly bishoprics were multiplied afterwards, the reader who is versed in these matters need not be told.

VI. The see of Antioch always took place next that of Alexandria, being ever accounted the prime city of the East. Like the rest, it arose by degrees into a patriarchate; first getting an honorary, then an authoritative superiority over that diocese. During the session of the second general council,

[o] Gel. Cyz. Hist. Conc. Nic. l. ii, c. 32.
[p] Conc. Chalc. Act. i.
[q] Ap. L. Allat. de consens. Eccl. Orient. et Occid. l. i. c. 9. n. 2.
[r] Chap. ii. n. 7.
[s] Vid. Alexand. Epist. Encycl. ap. Socr. l. i. c. 6.
[t] Apol. ii. s. 19. vid. s. 6.

the bishops not only of that province, but of the Eastern diocese, met together, to ordain Flavianus bishop of Antioch, whose act herein was ratified by the vote of that council; as the remaining part of the synod, meeting again the next year, tell pope Damasus, in their letter to him.[u]

About this time, or rather some time before, I guess, the bishop of Antioch had set up for a patriarchal power, and had begun to enlarge his jurisdiction from a province to a diocese. Now the Eastern diocese,[v] under the *Comes Orientis*, contained fifteen provinces—the three Palestine's, Phœnice, Syria, Cyprus, Phœnice Libani, Euphratensis, Syria Salutaris, Osrhoëna, Mesopotamia, Cilicia Secunda, Isauria, and Arabia: Cyprus, indeed, stood out, and would not submit to the see of Antioch; and though the bishop stickled hard to bring them under, yet the Cyprian bishops stoutly maintained their ancient rights. The case was canvassed and debated at large in the council of Ephesus;[x] and upon hearing the whole matter, the council adjudged it for the Cyprian churches, that they should still enjoy their ancient *αὐτοκεφαλία*, their liberties independent upon the see of Antioch, and passed a particular canon in favour of them. And so they continued for many ages: and therefore, in the old *Notitia*,[y] Cyprus is not placed under any of the patriarchates, but is noted to be a province *ἔχουσα παρ' ἑαυτὴν δεσποτείαν*, "having jurisdiction within itself."

But the rest of the provinces, for any thing that appears, submitted, and the bishop of Jerusalem, with his metropolitan of Cæsarea, were both for some time under the see of Antioch. And this renders St. Jerome's meaning plain enough in that known passage,[z] when he tells John bishop of Jerusalem, who in the controversy between him and Epiphanius had appealed to Theophilus of Alexandria, that if he would have appealed, it should have been either to him of Cæsarea, who was his metropolitan, or to the bishop of Antioch, as metropolitan of the whole East, that is, of the Eastern diocese. But when he says, this course was settled by the synod of Nice, it is plain it was his mistake: and indeed his own *ni fallor* shews he was not very confident and peremptory in the case.

The account of this patriarchate, as delivered by Nilus

[u] Ap. Theod. l. v. c. 9.
[v] Not. Imp. Orient. c. 104.
[x] Act. vii.
[y] Ubi supr. p. 147.
[z] Hier. ad Pammach.

Doxopatrius,[a] (with whom, in the main, concur many other ancient *Notitiæ*,[b]) stands thus. Immediately subject to the patriarch were eight metropolitans, who had no suffragan bishops under them, and eight, or, as others reckon, twelve archbishoprics: besides which, he had thirteen metropolitic sees—Tyre, containing under it thirteen bishoprics; Tarsus six; Edessa eleven, or, as others, ten; Apamea seven; Hierapolis eleven, the Latin *Notitiæ* reckon but eight; Bostra nineteen or twenty; Azarbus nine; Seleucia in Isauria twenty-four; Damascus eleven; Amida eight, or, as the Latins, seven; Sergiopolis five, but by some one less; Daras ten, the Latin *Notitiæ* call it Theodosiopolis, and allow but seven episcopal sees; and, lastly, Emesa, containing six. This was the state of that once venerable patriarchate.

VII. The next that succeeds is the patriarchate of Constantinople, which, though starting later in time, soon got beyond the other two. The bishop of Byzantium, or Constantinople, had for several ages been only a private bishop, subject to the metropolitan of Heraclea, which anciently had the τὰ πρωτεῖα, (as Procopius tells us,[c]) "the primacy" of all the cities of that country; in acknowledgment of which subjection, the bishops of Heraclea had ever the privilege to ordain the patriarch of Constantinople. But no sooner was that city made the seat of the empire, but great things were spoken of it; it was styled the "governing city," the "metropolis of the whole world,"[d] "a great city," (says Nazianzen,[e] in one of his sermons to the people of that place,) and the very next to Rome, nay, not at all yielding the primacy to it, it being πρώτη ἐν πόλεσι, "the first and chiefest city of the empire." And now the bishop of Constantinople began to appear considerable in the world, and both church and state conspired to render him great and powerful.

The fathers of the second general council holden in that city, considering that Constantinople was New Rome, conferred upon him[f] πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς, "the privilege of honour and respect next to the bishop of Rome." This, at one lift, set him over the heads of the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch. Accordingly, in the preceding canon of that council, and in a law of Theo-

[a] Ap. L. Allat. l. i. c. 9. n. 1. [b] Ap. Guil. Tyr. l. 23. Miræ. notit. Episc. etc.
[c] De ædific. Justin. l. iv. c. 9. vid. Chron. Alex. ad An. Const. xxv. p. 666.
[d] Chrysost. Homil. iv. de verb. Esai. s. 3. [e] Orat. xxvii. p. 472. [f] Can. 3.

dosius,[g] conform thereto concerning the bounds of dioceses and catholic communion, he is set before both the bishops of those sees; and, if the subscriptions to this synod be of any credit, we find Nectarius subscribing first to the decrees of the council. And when the Acts of the clancular synod at Ephesus were read in the Chalcedon council,[h] and it was found that the bishop of Constantinople was therein put in the fifth place, the bishops presently raised a clamour, why had he not his proper place, why was he thrust down into the fifth place: whereupon Paschasinus, the pope's legate, declared that he held Anatolius of Constantinople in the first place; which Diogenes of Cyzicum affirmed was according to the constitutions of the fathers. But to return to what we were upon. Though this canon of Constantinople gave the bishop no direct power, yet it gave him so mighty a value and reputation, that he wanted not opportunities enough to carve for himself. He was soon courted on all hands, his mediation requested, and his interposal desired for the ending differences; and where provincial bishops could not agree about the election of their metropolitans, the case was very often referred to him, and he performed the ordination.

This, in time, begat a right, at least a claim, over the churches in those countries that lay next him, especially the dioceses of Asiana, Pontica, and Thrace, in which, it is plain, he exercised a patriarchal power. Thus, to omit other instances, St. Chrysostom synodically heard the cause of Antoninus bishop of Ephesus, (the metropolis of the Asian diocese,) and afterwards went himself in person thither; where he convened a synod of seventy bishops of those parts, heard the cause over again, gave judgment upon it, and ordained a metropolitan in that city. He likewise deposed Gerontius bishop of Nicomedia, which lay in the diocese of Pontica, and some others, and filled up their sees; whereof we have elsewhere given an account at large. And this very instance we find produced and pleaded in the Chalcedon synod,[i] to prove the rights of the Constantinopolitan see over those churches. I know the validity of this good man's proceedings in this matter is disputed by some, and was of old put among the articles exhibited against him to the synod at the Oke: but no doubt can be made, but Chrysostom thought he had sufficient authority and right to do it; and would not have

[g] Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. i. l. 3. [h] Conc. Chalc. Act. i. Act. xi.

attempted it, had it not been warranted by the practice of his predecessors.

In the mean time, I cannot but smile at the grave fancy of a learned man,[k] who, without the least shadow of any other warrant than his own conjecture, will have Chrysostom to have acted herein as the pope's legate, and to have done all this by virtue of his absolute and supreme authority: so quick-sighted and acute are men to discern what never was, and so willing to believe what it is their interest should be true.

VIII. But to proceed with our patriarch of Constantinople, he held on much at this rate till the general council at Chalcedon, holden there anno 451, when what he had hitherto holden by custom, canonical authority made his right. By their ninth canon they provide, that if any bishop or clergyman have a controversy with his own metropolitan, it shall be at his liberty to appeal either to the exarch, that is, primate of the diocese, or to the see of Constantinople, where his cause shall be heard: a canon that invested him with a vast power, putting him into a capacity of receiving and determining final appeals from all those parts. The same they again ratify by their seventeenth canon, and by their twenty-eighth make a more particular provision for him. First, they profess, in general, altogether to follow the decrees of the holy fathers; then they recognise the the third canon of the second general council, (which was then read before them,) and decree the same privileges, and upon the same account, as that had done to the church of Constantinople: "Forasmuch (say they) as the reason why the fathers conferred such privileges upon the see of Old Rome, was, that it was the imperial city; and, upon the same consideration, the bishops of that second general council gave equal privileges to the see of New Rome; rightly judging, (as the canon goes on,) that the city which was honoured with the empire, and the senate, and enjoyed equal privileges with old imperial Rome, should also, in ecclesiastical matters, have the same honour with it, only coming after it, in the second place."[1] And because the bishop of Con-

[k] Morin. l. i. exercit. 14. p. 101.

[1] Impp. Theodosius, et Honorius AA. Philippo PF. P. Illyrici. "Omni innovatione cessante, vetustatem et canones pristinos ecclesiasticos, qui nunc usque tenuerunt, per omnes Illyrici provincias, servari præcipimus: tum, si quid dubietatis emerserit, id oporteat, non absque scientia viri reverendissimi sacrosanctæ legis Antistitis urbis Constanti-

stantinople had hitherto had no certain diocese, nor any place wherein to exercise jurisdiction, but what he held precariously, and as it were by courtesy, in the latter part of the canon they fix his bounds, giving him power over the three dioceses of Pontica, Asiana, and Thrace, that the metropolitans of all those places, and all the bishops of the barbarous countries belonging to those dioceses, should be bound to come, and receive their ordination from the bishop of Constantinople.

And now he looked like bishop of the imperial city, being invested with so ample and extensive a jurisdiction. For the three dioceses of Asiana, Pontica, and Thrace, were great and large. The first[m] containing eight provinces, (viz. Pamphylia, Lydia, Caria, Lycia, Lycaonia, Pisidia, Phrygia Pacatiana, and Phrygia Salutaris, both which were anciently comprehended under the *Φρυγία μεγάλη*, or "Greater Phrygia," as it stood opposed to the Lesser, that lay upon the Hellespont:) the second, eleven,[n] (Bithynia, Galatia, Paphlagonia, Honorias, Galatia Salutaris, Cappadocia Prima, Cappadocia Secunda, Hellenopontus, Pontus Polemoniacus, Armenia Prima, Armenia Secunda:) the third, six,[o] (Europa, Thracia, Hæmimontus, Rhodopa, Mœsia Secunda, Scythia.) The pope's legates were infinitely enraged at this canon, and the powers and privileges hereby given to the see of Constantinople, and used all possible arts to overthrow it, but all in vain; it passed clearly, and was subscribed by all the bishops then present in the synod, amounting to a very great number, whose subscriptions are still extant[p] in the Acts of the the council. After a full discussion of the whole matter, that no pretence of force or fraud might be objected, as many of the bishops of Asiana and Pontica as were then in the synod were desired to declare, whether they had freely submitted to this constitution: who accordingly stood up, and one after another did most solemnly protest that they had voluntarily and unconstrainedly assented to, and subscribed the canon, and that nothing was more acceptable to them. And many of them expressly declared they did it for this reason, because not only themselves but their predecessors had been ordained by the

nopolitanæ, (quæ Romæ veteris prærogativa lætatur,) conventui sacerdotali sanctoque judicio reservari." Dat. Prid. Jul. Eustathio et Agricola Coss. [421.]

[m] Vid. notit. Imp. c. 122. [n] Ibid. c. 126. [o] Ibid. c. 132.

[p] Act. xvi. tit. iv.

bishops of Constantinople, and that the see of Constantinople had these rights, ἐκ τῶν κανόνων, καὶ ἐκ τῆς προλαβοῦσης συνηθείας, "from canons and precedent customs."

So that it is more than probable, that the bishop of Constantinople had exercised this power within those dioceses almost ever since the time of, and by virtue of the third canon of the second general council. And it is observable what Eusebius, bishop of Dorylæum, a city of the greater Phrygia, tells the synod upon this occasion, that he had been at Rome, and there, in the presence of the clergy of Constantinople, that were with him, had read the canon (I suppose he means that of the second general council) to the pope, who approved and received it, (which I the rather take notice of, because not only modern writers, but Gregory the Great so confidently affirms,[q] that the church of Rome neither had copies, nor did admit the acts and canons of that council.) And whereas Eusebius of Ancyra scrupled to subscribe, yet he confessed, that he himself had been ordained by the bishop of Constantinople, that he had ever declined ordaining provincial bishops, and had done it only by direction of the bishop of Constantinople. And after, Thalassius, of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, told the synod, that they were of archbishop Anatolius's side, and did decree the same thing. The judges hereupon, having weighed all that had passed, declared that, in the first place, τὰ πρωτεῖα καὶ τὴν ἐξαίρετον τιμὴν, "that precedency and singular honour" should, according to the canons, be paid to the archbishop of Old Rome; and that, withal, the archbishop of the imperial city of Constantinople, being New Rome, ought to enjoy the same privileges of honour, and to have besides, ἐξ αὐθεντίας ἐξουσίαν, "power of himself," and by his own authority, to ordain the metropolitans within the dioceses of Asiana, Pontica, and Thrace; the election being first duly made within every province, and that then it shall be at the choice of the archbishop of Constantinople, whether the metropolitan elect shall come to him for his consecration, or whether, by his permission, it shall be done at home by the provincial bishops; and that this shall no ways prejudice the rights of metropolitans and provincial bishops in ordaining private and particular bishops, wherein the archbishop of Constantinople shall not interpose. Whereupon all, with one voice, cried out, "it was a righteous

[q] Lib. vi. indict. xv. epist. 31.

sentence; that they were all of that mind, that this just judgment pleased them all; that the things that had been established should take place, and that every thing had been done decently and in order." In conclusion, they wrote a synodical letter to pope Leo,[r] acquainting him with what had passed, and upon what grounds they had done it, and desiring his concurrence in it. And we may observe, they tell him, that in settling this power upon the see of Constantinople, they did but confirm τὸ ἐκ πολλοῦ κρατῆσαν ἔθος, "the custom which that church had of a long time obtained" over those three dioceses. Which puts it past all peradventure, what we noted before, that from the very time of the second general council, the Constantinopolitan bishops had exercised a kind of patriarchal jurisdiction over those churches, though never till now settled by canon.

IX. And now let the reader impartially reflect upon the whole affair, and when he has considered, what this wise and great council expressly affirm, that the privileges which the fathers gave to the see of Rome were merely upon the account of its being the imperial city, and that for the very same reason they gave equal privileges to the see of Constantinople, only reserving an honorary precedence to him of Rome; let him tell me, whether it can be supposed, they could or would have said and done this, had they known, or but so much as dreamt of any supreme authority, which Christ had immediately given the bishops of Rome over the whole church of God. Nor was this the only council that thus honoured the Constantinopolitan see: somewhat more than two ages after met the sixth general council in the Trullus, or great arched hall or *secretarium* of the palace, who confirmed[s] what both the former councils, that of Constantinople, and the other of Chalcedon, had done in this matter, and assigned each patriarch his proper place.

What additions or alterations after-ages made in the see of Constantinople, the reader may perceive somewhat by perusing the following accounts. In the Greek *Notitia*, published not long since out of the Bodleian library,[t] composed in the reign of the emperor Leo the Wise, about the year 891, this patriarchate had under it thirty-three metropolitans, who had under them three hundred and seventy-five episcopal sees, besides forty-one

[r] Ext. inter Conc. ubi supra.

[s] Can. 36.

[t] Inter Annot. D. Bevereg. ubi supr.

αὐτοκέφαλοι, or "independent archbishoprics," subject to no metropolitan. Leunclavius presents us with another Διατύπωσις,[u] or disposition of the churches of this patriarchate made by this same emperor, wherein are set down eighty-one metropolitans, containing under them five hundred and seventy-four suffragan sees, and thirty-nine archbishoprics. But surely this list is either greatly interpolated, or must be of a later date than it pretends to, being so different from the other, both in the number and the names of places, and not very consistent with itself: for whereas it reckons up eighty-one, yet when it comes to set down each metropolitan, with his particular suffragans, it gives but an account of fifty-seven of the number. But however this be, within an age or two after, partly by the addition of new provinces, partly by erecting new metropoles, it was enlarged; for in the *Notitia*, or discourse concerning the five patriarchal sees, written by Nilus Doxopatrius, the Archimandrite, anno 1003, the account stands thus: metropolitans,[x] sixty-five; under them, bishoprics, 640; archbishoprics without suffragans, and immediately subject to the patriarch, thirty-four. Anno 1283, Andronicus Palæologus entered upon the empire: he published an order,[y] according to which the metropolitans were to take place, wherein they are reckoned up to the number of an hundred and nine; and in another, agreed upon by the emperor and the patriarch, put out by Leunclavius,[z] but without any date, either of time or persons, are mentioned eighty metropolitical sees; archiepiscopal, thirty-nine. And thus much for the patriarchship of Constantinople.

XI. The fourth that remains is the patriarchate of Jerusalem, the last in time, and least in circuit. For several ages, the bishop of Jerusalem was no more than a private prelate, subject to the metropolitan of Cæsarea: for so the *Notitia*, published by William archbishop of Tyre, informs us,[a] that, according to ancient tradition, and records of good authority in those parts, the church of Jerusalem had no bishop under it, nor enjoyed any, or very little prerogative till the reign of Justinian, and the times of the fifth general council; though always, out of reverence to the place, custom and ancient tradition (as the fathers of

[u] Jur. Gr. Rom. l. ii. p. 88.

[x] Ext. ap. L. Allat. de consens. eccl. Orient. et Occident. l. i. c. 24.

[y] Ext. ad calc. Codin. de offic. C. P. p. 117.

[z] Jur. Gr. Rom. l. iii. p. 244.

[a] Ad calc. l. xxiii. Histor. suæ, p. 1015.

Nice inform us[b]) had allowed him a peculiar honour; and therefore those fathers decree him τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τῆς τιμῆς, "the consequence of honour;" that is, that he should have respect and precedence, before all the bishops of that province, next to his own metropolitan.

And, indeed, whatever they of the church of Rome may talk of the merit of St. Peter, as the foundation of the supereminent authority of that church, surely if any church might have pleaded merit, one might have thought it should have been that of Jerusalem, which for so many ages had been the metropolis of the Jewish nation, the seat of their kings, adorned with a most magnificent temple, and all the solemnities of divine worship; the place where our blessed Saviour spent the greatest part of his public ministry, where he preached so many sermons, wrought so many miracles, where he suffered, died, and rose again, and whence he ascended into heaven; where the apostolical college was kept for some years, and all affairs of the church transacted there; where St. James, the brother of our Lord, was made (and that, say some of the ancients, by our Lord's own hands) the first Christian bishop of that see; the place where the first church was planted, and from whence Christianity was propagated into all other parts of the world. This was the true mother church; and if merit might have challenged primacy and power, it had more to say for itself than all other churches in the world besides. But Cæsarea happening to be the metropolis of that province, and the seat of the Roman governor, carried away the superiority; and so Jerusalem, though it had an honorary respect, continued a private see, subject to the metropolitan of Cæsarea, as he for some time was to the patriarch of Antioch.

But after that the empire was become Christian, and that Constantine the Great, and his mother Helena, and some following emperors, began to reflect some peculiar favours upon that place, and had graced it with stately and magnificent buildings, and other marks of honour; and after that the devotion of Christians began to pay an extraordinary respect to the places of our Lord's crucifixion, sepulchre, and resurrection, the bishops of that church looked upon themselves as hardly dealt with, to be cooped up within so narrow a compass, and to be sub-

[b] Can. 7.

jected to another jurisdiction, and therefore resolved to throw off the yoke, and to get what power they could into their own hands.

The first that grasped at the metropolitic rights was St. Cyril, who disputed the case with Acacius bishop of Cæsarea, for which Acacius deposed him, and persecuted him, both in the synod at Seleucia, and in that which followed at Constantinople, about the latter end of Constantius's reign: what immediately followed in this controversy is uncertain, the history of the church being silent in that matter. In the council of Ephesus, Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem, laid claim to the metropolitical jurisdiction of that province, and sought to have it confirmed by a decree of that synod; but Cyril of Alexandria, president of the council, opposed and hindered it. After this, a high contest arose between him and Maximus, bishop of Antioch, who challenged Jerusalem and Palestine as within his diocese. The case was brought before the Chalcedon council,[c] where it was debated, and at last, by compromise between the two contending parties, brought to this issue: that the bishop of Antioch should retain the two Phœnicias and Arabia, (which, it seems, were also in dispute,) and the see of Jerusalem should have the three Palestine provinces for the bounds of his ecclesiastic jurisdiction. This was assented to, and ratified by the decree of the council.

And now the bishop of Jerusalem had his particular diocese, though of no very great extent, allotted him, and the tables were turned, and Cæsarea itself subjected to him, and the fifth and last place among the patriarchs assigned to him; as appears from the constitution of the sixth general council. And because Jerusalem lay in the borders, both of the Antiochian and Alexandrian patriarchates, therefore, to make up its jurisdiction, we are told,[d] that something was taken out of each; the metropolitic sees of Rabba and Berytus from him of Alexandria, as Cæsarea and Scythopolis from him of Antioch; and that, as a badge of his ancient subjection, the metropolitan of Cæsarea still had the honour to ordain the patriarch of Jerusalem,[e] as upon the same account he of Heraclea had to consecrate the patriarch of Constantinople: and in this patriarchal capacity we find the bishop

[c] Act. vii.

[d] Guilielm. Tyr. loc. citat.

[e] Nil. Doxopatr. ap. L. Allat. ubi supr. c. 9. n. 5.

of Jerusalem subscribing in all councils, and, upon occasions, summoning the bishops of his patriarchate. Thus, anno 608, we find John, bishop of Jerusalem, with his synod of the bishops of the three Palestines, sending a letter to John patriarch of Constantinople.[f] And when the council at Constantinople, under Memnas, had condemned Anthimus, Severus, and the rest of the Acephali, anno 536; Peter, patriarch of Jerusalem, (as he is all along called in the Acts of his council,[g]) summoned a patriarchal synod of all the bishops of the three Palestine provinces, who confirmed what had been done in the council at Constantinople; and thenceforwards the patriarchate of Jerusalem runs smooth and current through the history of the church. As to what bishops and metropolitans he had under him, the old *Notitia* gives us this account:[h] the patriarch himself had immediately under him twenty-five bishops; *αὐτοκεφάλους ἐπισκοπὰς*, Nilus Doxopatrius calls them;[i] "independent bishoprics," because subject to no other metropolitan; besides which he had four metropolitans: the metropolitan of Cæsarea, who had twenty bishops under him; he of Scythopolis, or Basan, who had nine; Rabba Moabitis, or, as Doxopatrius has it, Petra, who had twelve; and Berytus, who had thirty-five, which, by the authors we have cited, are particularly reckoned up.

CHAPTER V.

THE BOUNDS OF THE ROMAN PATRIARCHATE.

A return to the Roman patriarchate. The limits hereof not expressly set down by the ancients. Unjustly pretended to reach over the whole West. This granted by them of the Greek church, and why. The pope's patriarchal power disowned by the churches of Milan, Aquileia, and Ravenna. The independency and opposition of those churches to the Roman see, severally evinced by particular cases and instances. The power of metropolitans in France kept up independent from Rome. The truth of this confessed and cleared by De Marca. Other instances of preserving their rights against the pretensions of Rome, Hincmar of Rhemes, and the synod of Metz. Two other national churches instanced in—the African and the Britannic churches. The famous case of appeals in the church of Africa. A clear account of that matter. Their public rejecting the power which the pope challenged over those churches. The letters of the council

[f] Ext. Conc. vol. v. col. 188.
[g] Ext. ibid. col. 276, etc.
[h] Ap. Guil. Tyr. ubi supra, et Miræum notit. Episc. p. 48.
[i] Ubi supra.

of Carthage to pope Boniface and Cælestine to that purpose. Several useful and proper corollaries deduced from this story, for the evincing the vain pretensions of the papal power over those churches. The boldness of some in denying the truth of this whole story. The state of the Britannic church. The progress of religion and church-government here till the times of pope Gregory. The church governed by an archbishop and bishop at Austin's arrival. Their customs wholly different from, and independent upon Rome. Their absolute refusal to own the authority of Austin or the pope. The slaughter of the Bangor monks suspiciously charged upon Austin. The pope's proper patriarchate most probably shewed to be of equal extent with the jurisdiction of the *vicarius urbicus*. What provinces under his government. The Roman synod consisting of the bishops of those provinces. A two-fold patriarchate of the pope trifling and precarious. The bishops of Rome daily amplifying their jurisdiction. The means whereby they did this briefly intimated.

Having thus despatched the other patriarchs, we return to him of Rome, ever allowed to be the first and most honourable of the number: what his patriarchal bounds were, the records of the church have not so particularly set out, as they have done the rest. And here the champions of that church, when they find themselves pressed upon, and that the pope's universal and apostolical power is a post not to be defended, presently retreat to his patriarchate, which, with great confidence, they extend over the whole Western world; being content with half, when they cannot have all. And to this prodigious latitude some of them stretch the suburbicary churches,[k] (as if the whole Western empire had been nothing but the suburbs of Rome,) and in this sense, they tell us, Rufinus meant the canon of Nice; and this upon no wiser reason than (what is as trifling and precarious as the other) that the whole West was the special diocese of the bishop of Rome: but this looks rather like fancy and romance, than that grave and sober arguing that becomes those great names that use it. Omitting, therefore, this extravagant notion of suburbicary churches, come we to the thing itself.

And herein it must be granted, they have the later Greeks, Zonaras, Balsamon, Barlaam, Nilus, &c. on their side, who very liberally give him all the Western provinces, and that too by virtue of the sixth canon of Nice. A concession which they make not so much out of any kindness to the church of Rome, as partly out of a design to magnify the power and greatness of their own patriarch of Constantinople, who was to share equal privileges with him of Rome; partly because they were willing to keep the pope within any bounds, whose restless ambition

[k] Sirmond. Censur. de Eccl. Suburb. c. 4. p. 69. Advent. par. ii. c. 1.

they saw carrying all before it, and therefore cared not to throw him the West for his portion, for which they had no care or concernment what became of it, being mainly intent upon preserving their jurisdiction at home. And here I cannot but by the way remark the indiscreet and injudicious zeal of a very learned man,[1] who confidently asserts, that in the expedition of the Franks for the recovery of the Holy Land, God, by a peculiar providence, let the Eastern parts be subdued by the Western armies; that so those famous patriarchal sees might learn to strike sail to the see of Rome, and own the greatness and dignity of that church. Besides, it is to be considered, that in this concession the Greeks took their measures of things from the state of the church as it was in their time, when the pope had, in a manner, entirely subdued the Western provinces to the see of Rome. But in the better and more early ages the case was otherwise.

And, indeed, that the pope's patriarchal jurisdiction was far enough from extending over the whole West, there can be no better evidence, than that there was scarce any Western church in those days that did not, upon occasion, oppose the power, and remonstrate against the usurpations of the see of Rome. In Italy we need go no further than to those churches that lay next it, I mean the great churches of Milan, Aquileia, and Ravenna.

II. How great Milan was, and of how great reputation the bishop of it, so that he stood upon a level with him of Rome, we briefly noted before; it being, next Rome, the largest, richest, most plentiful, and populous city of the West, as Procopius tells us.[m] St. Ambrose's election and ordination to that see was made purely by the provincial bishops, and at the command of the emperor, without the least notice taken of the Roman bishop. A case so clear, that De Marca fairly gives up the cause,[n] and confesses, that in those times, and for some ages after, the pope had nothing to do in the ordination of the metropolitan of Milan: nay, that this was the case of all metropolitans out of the pope's jurisdiction in Italy, where the bishops of every province constantly ordained their own metropolitans, without any authority,

[1] Ph. Berter. Pithan. Diatrib. ii. c. 3. p. 170, 171.

[m] Goth. l. ii. c. 7.

[n] De Concord. l. vi. c. 4. n. 7, 8. vid. n. 6.

or so much as consent had from the bishop of Rome. But then not being able to shift off the evidence of truth, and yet willing withal to serve his cause, he does, in order to that design, distinguish the Roman patriarchate into ordinary, over a great part of Italy, and extraordinary, over the whole West. A distinction wholly precarious, and, which is worse, false.

And, indeed, what kind of patriarchate that must be, that could consist without right of ordaining metropolitans, the first and most inseparable branch of patriarchal power, would have become a person of his, I say not ingenuity, but wisdom and learning, to have considered. As for Milan, the metropolitic rights of that church, he confesses, continued independent at least till the year 555. And, indeed, it is plain from the epistle of pope Pelagius,[o] who confesses that the bishops of Milan did not use to come to Rome, but they and the bishops of Aquileia ordained each other: and when he was not able to reduce them by other means, he endeavoured to bring them in by the help of the secular arm, as appears from his letter to Narses,[p] the emperor's lieutenant, to that purpose. And afterwards, upon a difference that happened, Milan withdrew itself from the communion of the church of Rome for two hundred years together.[q] And though, with others, it was brought at last under the common yoke, yet upon every little occasion it re-asserted its original liberty. Thus, when anno 1059 great disturbances arose in that church,[r] pope Nicolaus the Second sent Peter Damian as his legate to interpose. This made it worse, the common outcry presently was, "that the Ambrosian church ought not to be subject to the laws of Rome, and that the pope had no power of judging or ordering matters in that see; that it would be a great indignity, if that church, which under their ancestors had been always free, should now, to their extreme reproach, (which God forbid,) become subject to another church." The clamour increased, and the people grew into an higher ferment; the bells are rung, the episcopal palace beset, the legate threatened with death; who getting into the pulpit, and having in a short speech set forth the pope's and St. Peter's power, and wheedled the

[o] Ext. Conc. vol. v. col. 805.

[p] Epist. v. ibid. col. 794.

[q] Plat. in vit. Steph. ix. p. 172.

[r] P. Dam. Act. Mediol. a seipso conscript. ext. ap. Baron. vol. xi. p. 265. et Jo. Monach. de vit. P. Dam. c. 16.

people with some popular insinuations, reduced things to a better order.

III. The church of Aquileia was much at the same pass with that of Milan, the bishops whereof mutually ordained one another, without so much as asking the pope leave. And though Pelagius would insinuate,[s] that this was done only to save the trouble and charge of a journey to Rome, yet De Marca honestly confesses[t] the true reason was, that Milan being the head of the Italic diocese, the ordaining the metropolitan of Aquileia belonged to him as primate; and the ordaining the primate of Milan belonged to him of Aquileia, as being the first metropolitan of the diocese of Italy.

Upon this account, and that of the *tria capitula*, this church held no correspondence with that of Rome for above an hundred years; and when Gregory the Great, having got the emperor on his side, attempted by force and armed violence to bring them to answer their stubbornness at Rome, the bishop of Aquileia with his provincial synod met, and wrote an humble remonstrance to the emperor Mauricius,[u] wherein they set forth the true state of their case, and the unjust and violent proceedings of the pope; and plainly tell him, that they had at the time of their ordination given caution in writing to their metropolitan, which they never had nor would violate; and that unless his majesty was pleased to remove this compulsion, their successors would not be suffered to come to Aquileia for ordination, but would be forced to fly to the archbishops of France, as being next at hand, and receive it there. The emperor was satisfied with their addresses, and wrote to the pope,[x] (Baronius calls them imperious letters, written more *tyrannico*, "like a tyrant,") commanding him to surcease the prosecution, and to create those bishops no farther trouble, until the affairs of Italy were quieted, and things might more calmly be inquired into. Baronius is strangely angry at this letter, even to the height of rudeness and passion, especially towards so good an emperor, that he should take upon him *arroganti fastu*, "with so much pride and arrogancy," not to beseech, but to command the pope; which he again says was done, not like an emperor, but a tyrant. But the Istrian and Ligurian bishops little regarded how it thundered at Rome: nay, to

[s] Epist. supr. laud. col. 815.
[t] Loc. supra citat.
[u] Ext. ap. Baron. Ann. 590. n. 38.
[x] Ext. ibid. n. 43.

make the balance hang more even, they had some time since advanced their metropolitan to the title and honour of a patriarch, which Baronius[y] himself grants was done while Paulinus was metropolitan of Aquileia, about the year 570: an honour a long time resident at Aquileia, then translated to Grado, and at last fixed at Venice. Though, withal, Aquileia having recovered its broken fortunes, resumed the style and dignity of a patriarch, an honour which it retains to this day.

IV. Let us next view the church of Ravenna, and see whether that was any more conformable to Rome than the rest. Ravenna had for some time, especially from the days of Honorius, been the seat of the Roman emperors; and in the declining times of the empire, the exarchs of Italy, who governed in chief under the emperor, constantly resided there, while Rome was under the command of a petty duke: swelled with so much honour and advantage, the bishops of Ravenna for some ages disputed place with them of Rome, the exarchs taking all occasions to curb and repress the pope. Anno 649, Maurus, sometime steward of that church,[z] entered upon the archiepiscopal see of Ravenna: a man, as my author grants, wise, and of a shrewd sharp wit. He, without taking any notice of Rome, was consecrated by three bishops of his own province, ordained his own provincial bishops, and was so far from seeking any confirmation from the pope, that he received his pall from the emperor. This gave infinite distaste to pope Martin, and, it is like, to his successor Eugenius, who sat but one year. But pope Vitalian, who succeeded, would not so put it up, but summons Maurus to appear, and answer his contempt at Rome: but he slighted the summons; for which the pope excommunicated him, and he in requital did the like to the pope; nay, upon his death-bed, obliged his clergy never to submit themselves to the bishop of Rome. Reparatus, his successor, trod in the same steps, and procured the emperor's rescript to free that church from any subjection to the Roman see. Anno 708, Felix of Ravenna[a] was content to receive his ordination at the hands of the pope; but when he came thither, an oath of allegiance and fidelity was required of him to the see

[y] Vol. vii. p. 568.

[z] Hieron. Rub. Hist. Ravennat. l. iv. ad Ann. 649. p. 203. 205, 206. Vid. Bar. ad Ann. 659. n. 2, 3.

[a] Baron. eod. Ann. n. 2—4. Rub. ibid. p. 213, 214.

of Rome. This he utterly denied: a confession of his faith he offered, but homage he would not pay, nor engage to send money to Rome. Nor more he did; but home he goes, where his people gave him little thanks for what he had done, and both agreed to defend their liberty: but it cost the old man dear, and them too, for that attempt. For Justinian Rhinotmetes, the emperor, (who favoured the pope,) being made acquainted with what was done at Ravenna, a fleet is sent, under the command of Theodorus Patricius, the city besieged and taken, several of prime quality lost their lives and fortunes, and the poor archbishop had his eyes put out, and was banished into Pontus, where he remained, until the severity of discipline had taught him better manners.

The same courage in asserting the privileges of their church against the papal encroachments, was afterwards shewn by John and Guibert, successors in that see, as, were it necessary, might be particularly related. But the case is too evident to be denied, and the argument thence too strong to be evaded, how little those times understood of any patriarchal jurisdiction which the pope had over all Italy, much less over the whole West.

V. If we look into France, we shall find them careful to secure the rights of metropolitans, and the privileges of provincial bishops, without being obliged to fetch them from Rome. The second council of Arles, anno 452, decree,[b] that no bishop shall be ordained without his own metropolitan, and three of the provincial bishops, the rest testifying their consent by letter. The second of Orleans, holden anno 533, renew the ancient form and manner of ordaining metropolitans,[c] that it shall be done by the bishops of the province, which shews how little they depended upon any foreign power in this matter.

But it is needless to insist upon this point, which the learned De Marca[d] has so fully cleared and vindicated, as a fundamental part of the liberties of the Gallican church, and has deduced it through the several ages and dynasties of their kings. I shall only remark, that when Hincmar, archbishop of Rhemes, had deposed Rothald, bishop of Suessons, for great misdemeanors, Rothald appealed to Rome, and pope Nicolaus espoused his cause, wrote sharply to Hincmar, and cited him to appear, and

[b] Can. 5. Conc. vol. iv. col. 1012.

[c] Can. 7. ibid. col. 1781.

[d] De Concord. l. vi. c. 3. per tot. c. 4. n. 3, 4.

answer what he had done, at Rome. But Hincmar would not stir, but published a large apologetic to the pope,[e] wherein he justifies his act; and though he gives good words, and great deference to the see apostolic, yet stoutly contends, that he ought to be content with a general care and inspection, and not interrupt the ordinary rights of metropolitans; and that it was infinitely reasonable, that the criminal should be referred to the judgment of his own province.

Two years before this, viz. anno 863, a French synod met at Metz[f] about the marriage of king Lotharius, wherein they determined contrary to the liking of the papal legates. However, they sent letters, with the reasons of their proceedings, by Guntharius archbishop of Colen, and Theatgaud of Triers, to pope Nicolaus. The pope, upon their arrival, called a synod, wherein he excommunicated the synod of Metz, and deposed the two archbishops that were sent with the letters, and published a *manifesto* of what he had done.[g] To this the bishops returned an answer, wherein having represented the personal affronts, and ill usage they had met with from him, they tell him, (chap. iv.) that as for his froward, unjust, and unreasonable sentence, contrary to all canons, they did not own it; yea, as being illegal and unwarrantable, they, together with the rest of their brethren, slighted and despised it, and utterly renounced communion with him, contenting themselves with the communion and fellowship of the whole church, over which he had so proudly exalted himself, and from which, through his pride and contempt, he had separated himself. And whereas he had styled them "his clerks," they bid him take notice they were none of his clerks, but persons whom, if his pride would have suffered him, he ought to have owned and treated as his brethren and fellow-bishops, with much more there spoken with a just but smart resentment.

And now can any man believe, the pope should have met with such treatment upon all occasions, and that from the wisest, gravest, most learned, and eminent persons in their several ages, had his title to the jurisdiction of the West been so clear and unquestionable as some men seem to represent it?

[e] Ext. ap. Bar. ad Ann. 865. vol. x. n. 35, etc.

[f] Annal. incert. auct. ad Ann. 863. inter script. cœtan. á Pith. edit. p. 62.

[g] Ext. loc. cit.

The same might be shewed in other countries; and he must be a great stranger to church-history, that can be at a loss for instances of this nature. I shall therefore instance only in two more, (and with them despatch this argument,) the African and the Britannic churches.

VI. I choose to instance in the churches of Africa, because so confidently challenged by them of Rome at every turn, and because they were under the civil jurisdiction of the prætorian prefect of Italy. And here, omitting infinite arguments that offer themselves, I shall insist only upon the famous case of appeals, commenced under pope Zosimus, anno 418, and not ended till some years after; which will furnish us with a plain and uncontrollable evidence, how little authority, more than what was honorary, the see of Rome in those days had over those churches.

The case, as briefly as it can well be summed up, stands thus: Apiarius,[h] a presbyter of Sicca in Africa, had been deposed by his diocesan Urbanus, for very notorious and scandalous offences, and the sentence ratified by a provincial council. Hopeless of any relief at home, over he flies to Rome, tells his tale to pope Zosimus, who restores him to communion, espouses his cause, and sends him back, with Faustinus an Italian bishop. and two Roman presbyters, into Africa, to see him resettled in his former place. When they arrived in Africa, they found a council of African bishops, to the number of two hundred and seventeen, sitting at Carthage, to whom they delivered their message, partly by word of mouth, partly by writing. But the writing being demanded, a memorial was produced containing instructions from pope Zosimus what they should insist upon: it consisted of four heads. First, concerning the appeals of bishops to the see of Rome. Secondly, against the busy resorting of bishops to court. Thirdly, concerning the handling the causes of presbyters and deacons by the neighbouring bishops, where they were unjustly excommunicated by their own. Fourthly, concerning the excommunicating bishop Urban, (who had deposed Apiarius,) or at least his appearing at Rome, unless he corrected what he had done amiss. But the main thing insisted on was that of appeals, and the pope's sending legates thither to hear

[h] Epist. Syn. Afric. ad Bonifac. Concil. vol. ii. col. 1670. item ad Cœlest. ib. col. 1670. Concil. Carth. vi. col. 1589. Cod. Can. Eccles. Afric. in init.

causes; and this, too, challenged by Zosimus in his memorial, by virtue of a canon of the council of Nice, giving leave to bishops accused or condemned to appeal to Rome, and power to the pope to hear and determine those appeals, either immediately by himself, or by commissioners which he should send to that purpose.

The African fathers were infinitely surprised to hear such a power claimed, and more to hear it claimed as due by a canon of Nice. They had searched into the canons of that council, which they found to be but twenty, and not one of that number to this purpose. While these things were debating, Zosimus dies, and Boniface succeeds, and the case is again canvassed; and the result of the consultation was, that, for the present, things should rest upon that bottom whereon the pope's memorial had placed them, until they could send to the three great churches of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, for authentic copies of the Nicene canons, to adjust and decide this matter. They wrote likewise to pope Boniface by his legates, (who then returned,) acquainting him with the state of the case, and what was done in it; and withal tell him, that if it were as those pretended canons claimed, the issue would be intolerable to them: but they hoped it would be found otherwise, no such thing appearing in their copies of that council. However they had sent to the Eastern churches for such as were most authentic, and entreated him also to do the like.

VII. Some years passed in this matter; at length the messengers that had been sent into the east returned, and brought letters[1] from Cyril of Alexandria and Atticus of Constantinople, importing that they had sent τὰ ἀληθέστατα καὶ πιστότατα ἴσα, "most true and exact copies" of the authentic synod of Nice, preserved in the archives of their churches, copies of which they had also sent to pope Boniface. Hereupon a full council of African bishops is convened, to which pope Cælestine (for Boniface was lately dead) despatched Faustinus as his legate. And now the case of Apiarius is again brought under examination, and found worse than it was before: the farther they raked into it, the more foul and offensive did it appear to them; until the conviction of his conscience, though sore against his will, forced him to confess all, and save them the trouble of any farther scrutiny.

[1] Ext. ubi supr. col. 1143.

And now this cause being over, and the pretence of appeals overthrown by the authentic copies of the canons of Nice, nothing remained but to write to Cælestine, which they did in a quick and smart strain, "wherein they first gave him an account of the case of Apiarius, and how troublesome and injurious his legate Faustinus had been to the whole synod, in asserting the privileges of the church of Rome, and by virtue thereof challenging that Apiarius should be re-admitted to communion, because his holiness (believing his appeal, which yet could not be made good) had restored him to communion; a thing which he ought in no wise to have done. Next they proceed earnestly to beseech him, that henceforth he would not so easily give ear to those that came from hence, nor admit any to communion whom they had excommunicated, which he might easily perceive was prohibited by the council of Nice; which if it has taken so much care about the inferior clergy, how much more did it intend it in the case of bishops, that where any are suspended from communion within their own province, his holiness should not rashly and unduly re-admit them; that he should, as became him, reject the unwarrantable repairing of presbyters and others of the inferior clergy, there being no canon of any council that has deprived the African church of this right: and that the decrees of Nice have most plainly committed both the inferior clergy and the bishops themselves to their own metropolitans; having most wisely and justly provided, that all affairs shall be determined in the very places where they arise, and that the grace of the Holy Spirit will not be wanting to every province, whereby equity may be prudently discerned, and constantly maintained by the ministers of Christ; especially since every man has liberty, if he be offended with the determination of his judges, to appeal to a provincial, or, if need be, to a general council: unless, perhaps, any one can think, that God should enable single persons to examine the justice of a cause, and deny it to a vast number of bishops assembled in council. Or, how shall a judgment then made beyond sea be valid, whereto the persons that are necessary to give in evidence, either through the infirmity of their sex, or age, and many other impediments that will intervene, cannot be brought? For that any commissioners should be sent hither by your holiness, we do not find ordained by the fathers in any synod. For as to what you

long since sent us by Faustinus, as part of the Nicene council, in the true and authentic copies of that council (which we received from Cyril of Alexandria and Atticus of Constantinople, and which we sent to your predecessor Boniface) we could find no such matter. In conclusion, they advise him, that he should not, upon the request of any man, send any of his clerks thither to execute his sentence, nor grant such leave to any, lest they should seem to introduce the smoky pride of the world into the church of Christ, which holds forth the light of simplicity and the brightness of humility to all them that are desirous to see God: that as to Faustinus, they are confident, that brotherly love continuing through the goodness and moderation of his holiness, Africa shall no longer be troubled with him." Such was their letter to the pope: a letter not fuller fraught with true matters of fact, than fortified with clearness and strength of reason.

VIII. From this naked and unartificial representation of the case, it is plain, first, That whatever power the bishop of Rome claimed in Africa, was, even by his own tacit confession, founded upon the canons of the church. Zosimus did not pretend a commission from Christ, or a delegation from St. Peter, but only a canon of Nice to justify his proceedings.

Secondly; That the canons of the church give the bishop of Rome no power over foreign churches, either to receive their excommunicated members, to hear and decide their causes, or to restore them to communion, or to send legates and commissioners with authority to determine the cause at home; for this, say the African fathers, *nulla invenimus patrum synodo constitutum.*

Thirdly; That Zosimus was guilty of a notorious forgery and imposture, in falsifying the Nicene canons, pretending a canon of Sardica to be a canon of Nice, and as such endeavouring to impose it, and his own power by it, upon the African churches. Can it be supposed, that Zosimus should be ignorant what and how many the Nicene canons were? The pope's legates were present, and, as we are often told, presided in that synod, brought the decrees home with them, (as all other great churches did,) where they were, no doubt, carefully preserved among the records of that church, and the frequent occasions of those times made them be daily looked into. Was not the pope, think we,

able to distinguish between Nice and Sardica, between an œcumenical council and a synod only of Western bishops, called, in another emperor's reign, above twenty years after? No, no, it was not a sin of ignorance, but the pope knew well enough which council would best serve his turn, that the world had a just and a mighty veneration for that of Nice, and that his design would be easily swallowed, if he could gild it over with the reputation and authority of that synod. It was obvious to except against Sardica, that it was but a particular council, and that the canon it made for appeals to Rome was only a provisionary decree, when the injured person was not like to meet with justice at home, but the whole mass of bishops was corrupted and set against him, as was the case of Athanasius and two or three more in respect of the Arians, who were the occasion, and for whose sakes that canon was made. But that of Nice was universal, and unexceptionable, and which he hoped would pass without control. But the African bishops, according to the humour of that nation, were of too honest and blunt a temper to be cajoled by the arts of Rome. They required to have the matter brought to the test, and to be judged by the original canons; and so the fraud was discovered, and brought to light in the eye of the world.

Fourthly; That the church of Africa, and, accordingly, every national church, has an inherent power of determining all causes that arise within itself: that this right is founded both upon most evident reason, (nothing being fitter than that controversies should be ended in the places where they began, where there are all advantages of bringing matters to a more speedy and equal trial,) and upon the wisdom and justice of the Divine Providence, which would not let his assistance be wanting in one place more than another, and especially there, where doing right to truth did more immediately make it necessary; and that it was as probable two or three hundred should sift out truth, as a single person. That the Nicene synod had made this the right of the African no less than other churches, and they did not understand how they had forfeited it, or that any council had taken it from them.

Fifthly; That it was not lawful for any person, accused or proceeded against in Africa, to appeal to transmarine churches, no, not to the see of Rome. This they tell Cælestine most ex-

pressly, and call them *improba refugia*, "wicked and unwarrantable refuges." Against this they had particularly provided in the council at Milevis,[k] not long before this contest arose, that if any clergyman had a controversy with his bishop, the neighbouring bishops should hear and determine it. But if there were any occasion of appealing, they should appeal no further than to an African council, or to the primates of those provinces. And that if any should resolve to appeal to any transmarine judgment, no man in Africa should admit them to communion. The canon, it is true, expresses only the appeals of presbyters, deacons, and the inferior clergy; but, as the fathers, in their letters to Cælestine, argue strongly, if this care be taken about the inferior clergy, how much more ought it to be observed by bishops?

Sixthly; That the power which the bishop of Rome sought to establish over other churches, evidently made way to bring pride, and tyranny, and a secular ambition into the church of God; and that if this course were followed, it would let in force, and domination, and a scornful trampling over the heads of our brethren, and perhaps the calling in the secular arm to remove the opposition it would meet with; principles and practices infinitely contrary to the mild and humble spirit of the gospel.

And now let the reader judge what power the pope had over the African churches, so solemnly denied, so stiffly opposed, not by two or three, but by two or three hundred bishops, twice met in council upon this occasion, and their judgment herein not precipitated, but passed upon most mature and deliberate debate and consultation, and after that the cause had been depending for five or six years together. The truth is, so great a shock is this to the papal power, that the advocates of that church know not which way to decline it. At last stands up one,[l] who, not being able to untie, resolved to cut the knot, directly charging both the acts of the council, and the epistles to Boniface and Cælestine, without any warrant from antiquity, to be forged and supposititious. But the best of it is, the writers in this cause that came after him, had not the hardiness to venture in his bottom. Nor have any of the many publishers of the councils, since that time, stigmatized them with the least suspicion of

[k] Conc. Mil. ii. Can. 22. vol. ii. col. 1542.

[l] M. A. Capell. de Apellat. Eccl. Afric. c. 4. p. 118.

being spurious, nor taken any notice of the trifling exceptions he makes against them.

IX. From Africa let us sail into Britain, and see how things stood in our own country, the first nation in the whole Western world that received the Christian faith; it being planted here, (as Gildas, an author of untainted credit, and no inconsiderable antiquity, informs us, and he speaks it too with great assurance,) *tempore summo Tiberii Cæsaris*,[m] "in the latter time of Tiberius's reign," which admit to have been the very last year of his life, (he died March the 16th, Ann. Chr. 37,) it was five or six years before it is pretended St. Peter ever came to, or founded any church at Rome. Christianity, though struggling with great difficulties, and but lukewarmly entertained by some, yet, as Gildas assures us, made shift to keep up its head in the following ages, as is evident from some passages in Origen, Tertullian, and others, and from the known story of king Lucius, (*Leuer Maur*, as the Britons call him, "the great brightness,") the first Christian king. But this we have particularly noted elsewhere.[n] Religion being settled, that church-government grew up here, as in other countries, by bishops, and then metropolitans, or superior bishops, there can be no just cause to doubt.

At the council of Arles, anno 314, we find three British bishops, among others, subscribing the decrees of that synod, Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, (the same, perhaps, that subscribed the determination made by the Sardican synod,) *Adelfius de civitate coloniæ Londinensium*, with Sacerdos a priest, and Arminius a deacon. After the empire had submitted to Christianity, we cannot question but that religion prospered greatly in this island, and that Constantine, who made it his business to advance it in all places, would much more give it the highest encouragement in that place, to which he owed both his first breath and empire.

What progress it made afterwards, I may not stand nicely to inquire; it is certain it flourished here under the Roman government until the declension of the empire, when that guard and protection being withdrawn, the country became a prey to the neighbouring Picts and Scots, as not long after to the Saxons, a warlike but pagan nation, whom the Britons had called in to

[m] Gild. de Excid. Brit. non longe ab init.

[n] Antiq. Apost. Life of S. Paul. s. x. n. 7. Introd. to the Apostolici, n. 8, 9.

their assistance, who drove the remainder of the Britons, and with them religion, into the mountains, where yet it throve under the greatest hardships.

Things continued thus, when, anno 596, pope Gregory the Great sent Austin the monk to convert these Saxons, who, after his first expedition, being, at Arles, consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, applied himself more closely to this errand than he had done before. He found paganism covering the greatest parts of the island, but withal a considerable church among the Britons; seven bishops they had,[o] as Bede informs us; a number, says Bale,[p] conformed to the seven churches of Asia; their sees were Hereford, Tavensis or Llandaff, Lhan-Padern-Vaur, Bangor, Elviensis or St. Asaph, Worcester, and Morganensis, supposed by many to be Glamorgan; but that being the same with Llandaff, R. Hoveden[q] reckons Chester in the room of it; or, as bishop Usher[r] thinks not improbable, it might be Caer-Guby or Holyhead in the Isle of Anglesey. These seven were under the superintendency of a metropolitan, whose archiepiscopal see had been formerly at Caer-Leon, upon Uske, (the famous river Isca,) in Monmouthshire, but, some years before Austin's arrival, had been translated to Menevia, or St. David's, (so called from the bishop that translated it,) in Pembrokeshire, though, for some time after, retaining the title of archbishop of Caer-Leon. And to him were the Welsh bishops subject, and by him ordained, as he by them, until the time of king Henry the First. Besides these episcopal sees, the Britons had colleges, or seminaries, and in them vast numbers of Christian monks, who dwelt especially at Bangor, under the care and superintendency of abbot Dinooth. But that which spoiled all was, that this church had rites and usages vastly different from them of Rome,[s] both in the observation of Easter, the administration of baptism, and many other customs. A most infallible argument, that the Britannic church had no dependance upon, had held no communication with the church of Rome: their celebration of Easter after the manner of the ancient Asiatic churches, clearly shewing that they had originally derived their religion from those Eastern parts. To

[o] Bed. l. ii. c. 2. p. 111. vid. Galfr. Monemuth. l. xi. c. 12. Girald. Cambr. itin. Cambr. l. ii. c. 1. p. 856. et not. D. Powell. ibid.

[p] De Script. Cent. i. n. 70. p. 64.

[q] Annal. Par. Post. sub Joann. R. fol. 454.

[r] De Primord. Eccl. Brit. c. 5.

[s] Bed. ubi supr. p. 110.

reduce, therefore, this church into subjection to Rome, was a great part of Austin's work.

In order whereunto, by the help of king Ethelbert, he procured a conference with them at a place upon the borders of Worcestershire, called, from this occasion, Augustine's Oke; Austin used all his arts to prevail upon them, persuaded, entreated, threatened, but in vain: after a long disputation, they declared they preferred their own ancient traditions and customs, from which they might not depart without leave and liberty from their own church. Nay, if the British fragment, produced by one of our great antiquaries,[t] be of any credit, abbot Dinooth plainly told him, with a "be it known to you," and "without doubt," "that they owed no more to the pope of Rome, than to every godly Christian, viz. the obedience of love and brotherly assistance: other than this he knew none due to him whom they called pope, and who claimed to be owned and styled 'father of fathers;' that for themselves, they were under the government of the bishop of Caer-Leon upon Uske, who, under God, was to oversee and guide them." Austin saw it was to no purpose at present to treat further, and so reserved himself for another conference. A second, therefore, and a more general meeting, is propounded and agreed to, whereto came the seven British bishops, and many other persons of learning, especially of the college of Bangor. Austin, as before, pressed them to a compliance with the Roman and apostolic church; but they, offended with his proud and contemptuous treatment of them, never so much as rising out of his chair at their coming to salute him, told him plainly, they would do nothing of what he demanded, nor would they own him for archbishop: prudently arguing among themselves, "if he would not now vouchsafe so much as to rise up to us, how much more, when we have submitted to him, will he despise and scorn us." Austin, finding no good was to be done upon them, parted from them with this passionate farewell: that "since they would not have peace with their brethren, they should have war from their enemies; and forasmuch as they refused to preach the way of life to the English, they should be punished with death by their hands." And his word, it seems, was made good: for soon after, Ethelfrid king of Northumberland, at the instigation (as is said) of Ethelbert king of Kent, marched with a powerful army to

[t] Spelm. Conc. Brit. Ann. 601. vol. i. p. 108.

Caer-Leon, and made great havoc and destruction, and, among the rest, slew twelve hundred of the innocent monks of Bangor, who were come along with their army, by fasting and prayer to intercede with heaven for its prosperous success. That Austin was the first spring of this fatal tragedy, moving Ethelbert as he did Ethelfrid, there are not only strong suspicions, but the thing is expressly affirmed by several historians of no inconsiderable credit and antiquity. It is true, Bede says this happened not till after Austin's death; but besides the inconsistency in point of chronology, it is suspicious that passage was foisted into Bede, it being wanting in the ancient Saxon translation of king Alfred, done within one hundred and fifty years after Bede's death. Nay, though we should grant the slaughter to have happened after the death of Austin, yet who knows not but he might easily lay the design with Ethelbert, though himself lived not to see the execution: and the proud and haughty spirit of the man gives but too much encouragement to the suspicion. What became of the British churches after this, I am not concerned to relate; it is enough to my purpose, that from the very originals of this church it was independent upon Rome, and that for six hundred years together: nor could be brought to strike sail, until fire and sword (the most powerful arguments of the papal cause) had converted, that is, in effect ruined and destroyed it.

X. From the whole of what has been said, laid together, the impartial reader will easily make this conclusion: how vain and frivolous the pretences are to the pope's patriarchal authority over the whole West, when there is scarce any one Western church that did not in those times stoutly appear against the encroachments of Rome. But you will say, where then shall we find the Roman patriarchate? certainly within much narrower limits.

And here nothing can offer itself with so much rational probability, as that his patriarchal jurisdiction was concurrent with that of the *vicarius urbicus*, or the "lieutenant of Rome," as his metropolitical was with that of the *præfectus urbis*, or "city-provost." Now the *vicarius urbicus* had ten provinces under his government,[u] four consular, viz. Campania, Tuscia and Umbria, Picenum Suburbicarium (the suburbicary, as well as other

[u] Notit. imper. c. 48.

provinces, being in some cases,[x] especially that of tribute, under the inspection of the prætorian prefect, and his lieutenant) Sicilia; two correctorial, Apulia with Calabria, and Lucania Brutiorum; four præsidial, Samnium, Sardinia, Corsica, and Valeria. This was the urbicary diocese, distinct from the Italic diocese, the metropolis whereof was Milan.

Within these bounds the bishops of Rome, especially after the times of the Nicene council, took upon them to exercise jurisdiction, to call synods, ordain metropolitans, and despatch other church-affairs: hence they had their usual synod, which was a kind of council in ordinary to the bishop of Rome, and met upon all important occasions. Such was the synod of pope Damasus, *καὶ τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ συνελθόντων ἐπισκόπων*, "and of the bishops that assembled with him at Rome," mentioned by Athanasius,[y] as convened about his cause. Such that of the bishops *ἐν τούτοις τοῖς μέρεσιν*, "in those parts," spoken of pope Julius,[z] as concurring with him in his letter to the Eastern bishops. The old Roman *Notitia* (produced by Baronius[a] out of the records of the Vatican, but of an age much later than the times we write of) tells us this synod consisted of seventy bishops; and much about that number we find them in the Acts of councils, as in the synod under pope Gelasius,[b] and in that under Symmachus.[c] Thus we find pope Leo[d] requiring the bishops of Sicily to send three of their number every year, upon Michaelmas-day, to meet the Roman synod, *fraterno concilio sociandi.* And the synod of Sardica,[e] sending their decrees to pope Julius, desire him to communicate them to the bishops in Sicily, Sardinia, and Italy, (i. e. that part of Italy that lay within the urbicary diocese,) that none of them might receive communicatory letters from any that had been deposed in that council. And this was the *πλῆθος ἐπισκόπων*, "the multitude of bishops" wherewith pope Leo was encompassed, and whom, by virtue of the power and pre-eminence, *τοῦ ἰδίου τόπου*, of his own proper place and jurisdiction, he had convened out of many cities in Italy, as the empress Galla Placidia speaks in her letter to Theodosius:[f] not but that sometimes here (as in other places) we find foreign bishops con-

[x] Vid. Zosim. Hist. l. ii. c. 13.
[y] Epist. ad Afric. in init.
[z] Ep. ad Orient. ap. Athan. Apol. ii. p. 580.
[a] Ad Ann. 1057. vol. xi. p. 243.
[b] Concil. vol. iv. col. 1260.
[c] Ibid. col. 1312.
[d] Ep. iv. c. 7.
[e] Ext. Ep. ap. Hilar. in fragm.
[f] Conc. vol. iv. col. 53.

vening in synods, with those under the jurisdiction of the Roman bishop, especially upon some extraordinary emergencies; but then this was only in a brotherly way, and at the invitation of the chief bishop of those parts, and not that they were under his charge and government. He had no direct and immediate influence over any but those who lay within the bounds over which the civil governors, who resided at Rome, extended their authority, and who, no doubt, fell in the willinglier with his jurisdiction, for the conveniency of their being aided and assisted by the church of Rome.

By all which we see, that no sooner were dioceses divided and settled by the civil constitution, but the Roman bishop began to extend his jurisdiction commensurate to the urbicary diocese, within which his metropolitical was at last swallowed up. This the learned archbishop of Paris readily grants,[g] and thinks is intimated in the ancient version of the Nicene canon, which we mentioned before, where the bishop of Rome is said to have principality over the suburbicary places, and all the province: the first denoting the government of the provost, the latter that of the *vicarius*, or lieutenant of Rome; and, consequently, the one represents the pope's metropolitical, the other his patriarchal jurisdiction. It is true, he often tells us of a twofold patriarchate the pope had, ordinary and extraordinary; the one reaching to the urbicary diocese, the other over the whole West: but with how little reason and pretence of truth we noted before.

We grant the pope had always great honour given him by all, and more by the Western churches, but authoritative power he had not but over his own special diocese; nor does St. Basil's styling him τῶν Δυτικῶν κορυφαῖον, "the chief of the Western bishops," imply any more than dignity and precedence: or the empire's being divided into East and West, and, in allusion thereto, the churches being sometimes distinguished into Eastern and Western, make any more for his Western patriarchate, than it did for the bishop of Constantinople's being patriarch over the whole East: arguments which I should be ashamed to mention, but that they are produced by such great names, and are indeed the best they have in this matter. I grant that, according to the ambitious humour of that church, they were always

[g] De Concord. l. i. c. 7. s. 6.

attempting to enlarge their borders, and to propagate their power beyond its just limits: and partly by recommending persons to be bishops in foreign churches, and thence proceeding to impose them; partly by interposing in ordinations, and exacting an oath of obedience to the see of Rome from the persons consecrated; partly by challenging the immediate decision of episcopal causes, and a power to confirm, translate, excommunicate, depose, or restore all delinquent bishops; partly by drawing appeals to Rome, and taking the determination of matters from the cognizance of their proper judges, and arrogating the sole privilege of judging and condemning heresies; partly by claiming to preside in all councils, and, if disobliged, withholding their assent to the decrees of synods; partly by sending their legates into foreign countries to hear and decide cases, and take up controversies, by taking off, and engaging brisk and active bishops by honorary employments, by sending commissions to the bishops of the greater sees, and lodging certain powers in their hands, to act as their vicars within their several provinces, that so they might seem to derive their authority from the Roman see, as they did at Thessalonica, Corinth, Justiniana Prima, Arles, &c.; partly by giving all imaginable encouragement to persons, whether of the clergy or laity, to send to Rome for the resolution of difficult and important cases; and partly by despatching missionaries to convert pagan countries. By these, and infinite other the like arts and methods, they grew in time, though not until some ages, to challenge and exercise a power over all the churches of the West: but from the beginning it was not so. The sum then of all that has been discoursed hitherto is this: that as it was the dignity of the city of Rome gave the bishops of that place pre-eminence above all other primates or patriarchs, so it was the division of the empire made by Constantine, exalted his power from that of a metropolitan to a patriarch, and enlarged it to an equal extent with the diocese of the lieutenant of Rome; within which bounds they pretty well contained themselves, until their pride and ambition began more openly to break out, and to disturb the peace and order of the church.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENCROACHMENTS OF THE SEE OF ROME UPON OTHER SEES, ESPECIALLY THE SEE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

The Roman bishops breaking the bounds of all laws and canons. Their taking hold of all occasions of magnifying their own power. Instances of Julius, Damasus, Innocent, Zosimus, to this purpose. The briskness and activity of pope Leo. His many letters written to advance the reputation of his authority. His jealous eye upon the growing greatness of the see of Constantinople. The attempts and actings of his legates in the council of Chalcedon. Their mighty opposition against the passing the twenty-eighth canon of that synod. The fraud of Paschasinus in citing the sixth canon of Nice. Their protestation against the power granted to the bishop of Constantinople. Pope Leo's zeal and rage against these synodal proceedings. Felix's excommunicating Acacius of Constantinople. The pretended occasion of that sentence. The same spleen continued and carried on by pope Gelasius. A reconciliation procured by the emperor Justin, between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople. Pope John's insulting over Epiphanius in his own church at Constantinople. John the Second's raving letter to Justinian. The bishop of Constantinople assumes the title of Œcumenical Patriarch. This in what sense (probably) meant. The passionate resentment of Pope Pelagius hereat. The same zeal shewed by his successor Gregory the Great. His letters written upon that occasion. The hard words he everywhere bestows upon that title. His mistake about the offer of that title to the pope in the Chalcedon council. The true state of that case. This title frequently given to the Constantinopolitan bishops in the council under Menans, before John assumed it. Baronius's poor evasion of that matter. Gregory still continues to thunder out anathemas against this title. All this suspected to be but noise, and the quarrel only because themselves had not the title. Phocas's usurpation of the empire. The monstrous villany and wickedness of that man. Pope Gregory's scandalously flattering caresses to him and his empress. Boniface the Third makes suit to Phocas, and procures the title of Œcumenical to be affixed to the see of Rome. The pope's daily enlargement of their power and tyranny, and their advantages for so doing. The whole concluded with the canons or "dictates" of pope Hildebrand.

Though custom and the canons of the church had set out the bishop of Rome his proper portion in the ecclesiastic government, yet how hard is it for covetousness and ambition to keep within any bounds? A spirit of pride still fermented in that see, that made them restless, until they had thrown down all enclosures, and that "their sheaf alone (as it was in Joseph's vision) arose and stood upright, and the sheaves of their brethren stood round about, and did obeisance to it." In the discovery whereof we shall only remark the more general attempts they made concerning it. And, first, nothing made more way to their usurped dominion, than the magnifying their own power, and the privileges of their church upon all occasions.

II. To begin no earlier than pope Julius: in his letters to the bishops of Antioch, to make them more willing to submit their cause to be tried at Rome, he had, it seems, highly extolled the greatness of that church, and the dignity and authority of his see, as appears by the sum of their answer,[h] and his rejoinder to their letter. Not long after, pope Damasus, writing also to the Eastern bishops, commends them that they had yielded due reverence to the apostolic see:[i] and though this was spoken with modesty enough, (awed hereinto perhaps by the synod at Rome, in whose name he wrote,) yet in his epistle[j] to them of Numidia, and in general to all catholic bishops, (if that epistle be genuine,) he speaks out, telling them that, according to ancient institutions, they did well in all doubtful cases to have recourse to him as to the head, and that this was founded upon custom and ecclesiastic canons; concluding his long epistle thus: "all which decretals, and the constitutions of all my predecessors, which have been published concerning ecclesiastical orders and canonical discipline, we command to be observed by you, and all bishops and priests, so that whoever shall offend against them shall not be received to pardon; the cause properly respecting us, who ought to steer the government of the church." This was most pontifically spoken, and boldly ventured at, especially if we consider how little the African bishops regarded the authority of the Roman church, when the case of appeals arose a few years after, as we have already seen at large. Siricius came next to Damasus, and he, in his letter[k] to Himerius of Taragon in Spain, magnifies the Roman church as the head of that body, and bids him convey those rules he had sent to all the bishops in that and the neighbour countries, it not being fit that any bishop should be ignorant of the constitutions of the apostolic see. Innocent the First more than once and again styles[l] the church of Rome the fountain and head of all churches, and this built upon ancient canons; and yet perhaps meant no more, than that it was the principal and most eminent church of the Christian world: an honour which upon several accounts, intimated before, antiquity freely bestowed upon it. Zosimus, in a letter to the council of Carthage, (produced by Baronius out

[h] Ap. Sozom. l. iii. c. 8. ap Alban. Apol. ii. p. 579.
[i] Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 10.
[j] Dam. Epist. v. Conc. vol. ii. col. 876.
[k] Epist. i. c. 15. ib. col. 1022.
[l] Vid. Innoc. Epist. 21. 24, 25. Conc. vol. ii.

of a Vatican copy,[m]) makes a mighty flourish with the unlimited power of St. Peter, that he had the care, not only of the Roman, but of all churches, ratified by the rules of the church, and the tradition of the fathers; that both by divine and human laws this power descended upon the bishop of that see, whose sentence none might presume to reverse.

III. Leo the Great entered that see about the year 440: a man of somewhat a brisker and more active temper than those that had been before him, and one that studied by all imaginable methods to enlarge his jurisdiction; and being a man of parts and eloquence, did amplify and insinuate his power with more advantage. He tells the Mauritanian bishops,[n] "that he would dispense with the election of those bishops who had been immediately taken out of the laity, so they had no other irregularity to attend them, not intending to prejudice the commands of the apostolic see, and the decrees of his predecessors; and that what he passed by at present, should not hereafter go without its censure and punishment, if any one should dare to attempt what he had thus absolutely forbidden. And elsewhere,[o] that bishops and metropolitans were therefore constituted, that by them the care of the universal church might be brought to the one see of St. Peter, and that there might be no disagreement between the head and the members. And in a sermon upon the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, in a profound admiration he breaks out into this rhetorical address:[p] "These (says he) are the men that have advanced thee to this honour, that thou art become a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal and priestly city; that being by the holy see of St. Peter made head of the world, thou mightest govern farther by means of a divine religion, than by worldly power. For although enlarged by many victories, thou hast extended the bounds of thy empire both by sea and land, yet is it far less which thou hast conquered by force of arms, than that which thou hast gained by the peace of the church."

IV. But Leo was a man not only for speaking, but for action. He saw the emperors and the Eastern bishops were resolved to advance the see of Constantinople, that it might bear some proportion to the imperial court, and that the synod of Constanti-

[m] Ad Ann. 418. vol. v.
[n] Epist. lxxxvii. c. 1.
[o] Epist. lxxxiv. c. 11.
[p] Serm. i. in Natal. App. c. 1.

nople had already adjudged it the place of honour next to Rome; that therefore it concerned him to bestir himself, to stifle all attempts that way, well knowing that the glory of that would eclipse his lustre, and cramp those designs of superiority and dominion which the bishops of Rome were continually driving on over the church of Christ. A general council was now called to meet at Chalcedon, anno 451, wherein were present no less than six hundred and thirty bishops: hither pope Leo sent his legates, furnished with peremptory instructions (which they afterwards read openly in the synod) to keep a quick eye upon all motions that way, and with all possible resolution to suppress them. At the opening of the council, the legates cunningly slipped in a clause, telling the fathers,[q] that they had such and such things in command from the most blessed and apostolical bishop of the city of Rome, which was "the head of all churches:" which either was not heeded by that synod, or passed by in the sense before declared, as allowing it an honorary preeminence above the rest.

In the fifth session of that council,[r] the papal legates moved that the epistle of Leo about the condemnation of Nestorius might be inserted into the very definition of the council against that heresy: craftily foreseeing what a mighty reputation it would give the pope in the eye of the world, and to what vast advantage it might be stretched afterwards. But the council stiffly opposed the motion, and said, they freely owned the letter and were ready to subscribe it, but would not make it part of the definition. The legates were angry, demanded the letter back again, and threatened to be gone, and to have a synod at Rome. And when the emperor intimated some such thing, the bishops cried out, they were for the definition as it was; and they that did not like it, nor would subscribe it, might, if they please, get them gone to Rome. After this, all things went on smoothly until they came to frame the canons, among which one was,[s] that the bishop of Constantinople should enjoy equal privileges with the bishop of Rome: and then the legates could hold no longer, plainly telling them, that this was a violation of the constitution of the great synod of Nice; and that their commission obliged them, by all ways, to preserve the papal

[q] Conc. Chal. Act. i. Conc. vol. iv. col. 93.
[r] Act. v. col. 555, etc.
[s] Ibid. Act. xvi. col. 810.

dignity, and to reject the designs of any who, relying upon the greatness of their cities, should attempt any thing to the contrary.

To prove that this was contrary to the Nicene decrees, they produced the sixth and seventh canons of that council, beginning thus, as Paschasinus repeated them: *ἡ ἐκκλησία Ῥώμης πάντοτε ἔσχε τὰ πρωτεῖα· ἐχέτω τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡ Αἴγυπτος*, &c.: "the church of Rome ever had the primacy: let Egypt therefore have this privilege, that the bishop of Alexandria have power," &c.: where, instead of the first words of that canon, *τὰ ἀρχαία ἔθη κρατείτω*, "let ancient customs still take place," the legate shuffled in this sentence, as more to his purpose, "the church of Rome ever had the primacy." And admitting here that this was only the title to that canon in the Roman copy, yet it is somewhat more than suspicious, that Paschasinus intended it should be understood as part of the canon itself; which if so, there could not be a bolder piece of forgery and imposture. But the fathers were not to be so imposed upon. Aetius, archdeacon of Constantinople, produced a copy from among the records of that church, which he delivered to Constantine the secretary, who read it according to the genuine words of the canon, without any such addition, "let ancient customs still take place," &c.; and in confirmation of that were next read the second and third canons of the second general council at Constantinople. And because the legate had objected that the canon had been procured by fraud, the judges required the bishops concerned to declare their minds, who all readily declared the contrary. The case having been thus fully debated, and nothing material being alleged against it, the canon passed by the unanimous suffrage of the fathers; the Roman legates only entering their protestation, and resolving to acquaint the pope with what was done, that so he might judge both of the injury done to his own see, and the violence offered to the canons.

V. No sooner did the news of what had passed in the synod arrive at Rome, but pope Leo stormed to purpose, wrote to Anatolius,[t] bishop of Constantinople, charging him with pride and ambition, with invasion of the rights of others, with irreverence towards the Nicene canons, contrary to which he had

[t] Epist. liii. c. 2.

exalted himself above the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch. He despatched letters also to the emperor Marcianus,[u] to his lady the empress Pulcheria, and to Juvenal bishop of Jerusalem, and the rest of the fathers of the synod, all to the same effect, complaining of the pride of Anatolius, and the irregular proceedings of the council; that the privileges of churches were destroyed, the bounds of metropolitans invaded, many depressed to make way for one, venerable decrees made void, and ancient orders trodden in the dirt. That whatever rules were made contrary to the canons of Nice were null; that the care and inspection of these things was committed to him, a duty which he could not neglect without being guilty of unfaithfulness to his trust; that therefore, by the authority of St. Peter, he repealed and made void whatever any council had agreed upon, repugnant to the Nicene canons; yea, though done by many more in number than were in that venerable synod, declaring that no regard or reverence was to be paid to their constitutions. In all which, though nothing appear above ground but a mighty zeal for the honour of the Nicene canons, yet it is plain enough it was his own ambition, his envy and emulation, that lay at the bottom. And, indeed, neither Leo, nor any of the bishops of that see, could ever pardon the Chalcedon synod, not only for making the bishop of Constantinople equal to him of Rome, but for placing the primacy of the Roman church, not in any divine right, but only in Rome's having been the seat of the empire.

VI. Henceforward they beheld the bishops of that place with an evil eye, as competitors with them in the government of the church, and the likeliest persons to give check to their extravagant designs, and therefore laid hold upon all occasions to weaken their interest, and to vent their spleen against their persons: and it was not long after, that a fit occasion presented itself.

John the Tabennosiot[x] had by gifts and bribes (enabled thereto by being steward and treasurer of that church) procured himself to be made bishop of Alexandria, expressly contrary to his oath lately made to the emperor Zeno, that he would never attempt that see; for which he caused him to be expelled, and Peter

[u] Epist. liv. lv. lxi. lxii. cv.

[x] Evagr. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 11, 12, etc. Vid. Gest. de nom. Acacii. Conc. vol. iv. col. 1081. Gelas. Epist. xiii. ad Epp. Dard. ib. 1119. et Tom. de Anath. vincul. ib. col. 1227.

Mongus, who had been heretofore consecrated to that place, to be restored. Peter was a patron of the Eutychian heresy, but which at first he craftily dissembled, insinuating himself into the favour and friendship of Acacius bishop of Constantinople, who constantly held communion with him; but was so far from siding with him in any heretical sentiments, that no sooner did he hear that Peter[y] had publicly anathematized the Chalcedon council, but he despatched messengers to Alexandria to know the truth of things, before whose eyes Peter cast a mist, having formed a judicial process about that matter, and brought in persons to depose that he had done no such thing. Nay, he himself wrote to Acacius,[z] assuring him that the charge was false, and that he had, and did confirm and embrace the council of Chalcedon; though all this was pretence and elaborate hypocrisy. John, driven out from Alexandria, flies to Rome, giving out himself to be a martyr for the cause of pope Leo, and the faith of the Chalcedon synod.

Welcome he was to pope Simplicius, who wrote to the emperor in his behalf; but dying not long after his arrival, his successor Felix readily espoused the quarrel, and after some preparatory messages and citations, (wherein he required of the emperor Zeno, that Acacius might be sent to Rome, there to answer what John of Alexandria laid to his charge,) taking advantage of two synods at Rome, held one soon after the other, twice excommunicated and deposed Acacius, for communicating with him of Alexandria. Letter after letter he wrote, both to the emperor, and the clergy and people of Constantinople, that the sentence against Acacius might be owned and put into execution, who yet continued in his see till his death, without any great regard to the sentence from Rome; which he so far slighted,[a] that, to be even with him, he struck the pope's name out of the diptychs, to shew the world he renounced all communion with him. This so much the more enraged his enemies at Rome, who all his life long pelted him with continual clamours and threatenings; nay, Felix and his successors persecuted his very memory, denouncing censures against any that should mention his name with respect and honour. And I cannot but observe, that in the edict that was passed against him at

[y] Evagr. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 16.
[z] Ext. Epist. ib. c. 17.
[a] Basil. Cil. Hist. Eccl. ap. Niceph. l. xvi. c. 17.

Rome,[b] mention is made of nothing but contumacy against the pope's admonitions, the ill-usage and imprisonment of his legates, and the affront therein offered to his person; and in the excommunicatory letter sent to Acacius himself,[c] though favouring of heretics was the great and indeed only thing pretended abroad, yet the very first thing wherewith he charges him, is contempt of the Nicene council, and invading the rights of other men's provinces. It seems, though he was loth to speak out, it was the decree of the late synod of Chalcedon still stuck in his stomach, by which the Constantinopolitan patriarch had been advanced to so much power in the East, and made equal to him of Rome.

And indeed Gelasius, who came after Felix, says plainly,[d] that the apostolic see never approved that part of the Chalcedon canons, that it had given no power to treat about it, and by its legates had protested against it; and thence most infallibly infers, that therefore it was of no authority or value; and, accordingly, Peter of Alexandria, which was the second see, (i. e. according to the constitution of the Nicene canon,) could not be duly absolved by any other power than that of the first see, i. e. his own; accounting that of Constantinople (as he elsewhere asserts[e]) not to be reckoned so much as among metropolitan sees. And, as he argues in his epistle to the emperor Anastasius,[f] if Christians be obliged in general to submit to their regular bishops, how much more should submission be made to the bishop of that see, to whom both God and the subsequent piety of the church have always given the preeminence above all bishops; and so he goes on, according to the custom of the men, to speak big words of the authority and privileges of the apostolic see.

VII. Several years this breach, that had been made, remained, until Justin, a man of very mean originals, having by no good arts gained the empire, thought it his interest to oblige and unite all parties; and first he begins to court the pope, to whom he wrote,[g] giving him an account of his advancement to the empire, and begging his prayers to God to confirm and establish it: this Hormisda, in his answer, calls a paying the first-fruits of his

[b] Ext. in. calc. Gest. de nom. Acac. ubi supr. col. 1083.
[c] Felic. Epist. vi. ib. col. 1073.
[d] Tom. de Anath. ubi supra.
[e] Ad Epp. Dard. ib. col. 1207.
[f] Epist. viii. ib. col. 1182.
[g] Inter. Epist. Hormisd. Concil. vol. iv. col. 1469.

empire due to St. Peter. Hereupon reconciliation is offered, and John, bishop of Constantinople, writes to him to that purpose; which he at length consents to, upon this condition, that the name of Acacius might be stricken out of the diptychs; which at last is done, and that of the pope again put in, and so a peace is pieced up, and the catholic faith professed on both sides, according to the decrees of the four general councils. And though Epiphanius, who succeeded John in the see of Constantinople, maintained the same correspondence, yet, whenever it came to any important instance, the pope could not forget his proud domineering temper over the bishops of that church: which sufficiently appeared about this very time, when John the First, Hermisda's successor, being by Theodoric, king of the Goths, sent ambassador to Constantinople, with this message to the emperor Justin, either that he should restore to the Arians their churches in the East, or expect that the Catholics in Italy should have the same measures, he departed from Rome with weeping eyes and a sad heart, being grieved not more to be made the bearer of a message so contrary to his judgment, than to be put upon an employment that seemed a diminution to the papal dignity; he being (as Marcellinus observes[h]) the only pope that had ever been commanded out of the city upon any such errand. However, arriving at the imperial city, he resolved to keep up his port, entered with great state, and being invited to sit upon a seat even with that of Epiphanius,[i] bishop of that church, he refused, telling them he would maintain the prerogative of the apostolic see, not giving over until a more eminent throne was purposely placed for him above that of the bishop of Constantinople: as if it had not been enough to reproach and vilify him at a distance, unless, contrary to all laws and canons, and to the rules of modesty, civility, and reason, he also trampled upon him in his own church. Nay, Anastasius adds,[k] that the emperor, in honour to God, came before him, and prostrated himself upon the ground to adore and worship him.

Pope John the Second, about ten years after, writing to Justinian,[l] (though there want not very learned men who question the credit of that epistle,) talks *stylo Romano*, just after the rate

[h] Chron. Indict. 3. Philox. et Prob. Coss. p. 61.

[i] Niceph. Hist. Eccl. l. xvii. c. 9.

[k] In vit. Joan. i. Conc. vol. iv. col. 1601.

[l] Epist. ii. ibid. col. 1745.

of his predecessors: he tells the emperor, it was his singular honour and commendation, that he preserved a reverence for the Roman see; that he submitted all things to it, and reduced them to the unity of it; a right justified by St. Peter's authority, conveyed to him by that authentic deed of gift, "Feed my sheep;" that both the canons of the fathers, and the edicts of princes, and his majesty's own professions, declared it to be truly the head of all churches. Where yet (as in infinite other expressions of that nature in the pontifical epistles) he warily keeps himself within general terms, capable of a gentler or a brisker interpretation, as it stood with their interest to improve.

VIII. Wearied out with continual provocations, oppositions, and affronts from Rome, the patriarchs of Constantinople began to think upon some way, by which they might be better enabled to bear up against them. To this end, John, who, from his extraordinary abstinence, was surnamed Nesteutes, or "the faster," being then bishop of that see, in a synod convened there, anno 589, about the cause of Gregory, bishop of Antioch, procured the title Œcumenical, or universal bishop, to be conferred upon him; with respect, probably, to that city's being the head seat of the empire, which was usually styled *orbis Romanus*, and *ἡ οἰκουμένη*, "the universe," or whole world, and it could not be therefore thought extravagant, if the bishop of it did assume a proportionable title of honour, nothing appearing that hereby he laid claim to any extraordinary jurisdiction.

Nor, indeed, is it reasonable to conceive, that the Eastern patriarchs, (who, as Evagrius, who was advocate for Gregory in that synod, tells us,[m]) were all, either by themselves or their legates, present in this council, together with very many metropolitans, should at one cast throw up their own power and authority, and give John an absolute empire and dominion over them; and therefore can be supposed to grant no more, than that he, being the imperial patriarch, should alone enjoy that honourable title above the rest: besides, that every bishop, as such, is, in a sense, intrusted with the care and solicitude of the universal church, and though for conveniency limited to a particular charge, may yet act for the good of the whole. Upon this ground it was, that, in the ancient church, so long as order and regular discipline was observed, bishops were wont, upon occasion, not only

[m] Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 7.

to communicate their counsels, but to exercise their power and functions beyond the bounds of their particular diocese; and we frequently find titles and characters given to particular bishops (especially those of patriarchal sees) equivalent to that of universal bishop: I cannot but mention that passage of Theodoret, who, speaking of Nestorius's being made bishop of Constantinople, says,[n] that he was intrusted with the presidency of the catholic church of the orthodox there, *οὐδὲν δὲ ἧττον καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἁπάσης*, "which was nothing less than that of the whole world:" a passage which perhaps might the more encourage and invite John, at this time, to assume the title.

IX. But in what sense soever intended, it sounded high, but especially made a loud noise at Rome, where they were strangely surprised to find themselves outshot in their own bow; for though they had all along driven on the design with might and main, yet they had hitherto abstained from the title. Pelagius, who at this time sat in that chair, was extremely nettled at it, and immediately despatched letters[o] to John and the bishops of his synod, wherein he rants against this pride and folly; talks high of the invalidity of all conciliary acts without his consent and approbation; charges them, though summoned by their patriarch, not to appear at any synod, without authority first had from the apostolic see; threatens John with excommunication, if he did not presently recant his error, and lay aside his unjustly usurped title of universal bishop; affirming that none of the patriarchs might use that profane title, and that if any one of them were styled Œcumenical, the title of patriarch would be taken from the rest, a piece of insolence which ought to be far from all true Christians; with a great deal more to the same effect.

I know the last publishers of the councils make this epistle to be spurious, a false piece of ware patched up in Isidore Mercator's shop. But however that be, plain it is from St. Gregory,[p] (who sent copies of them to the bishops of Antioch and Alexandria,) that Pelagius did write such letters, wherein, by the authority of St. Peter, he rescinded the Acts of that synod, *propter nefandum elationis vocabulum*, "for the sake of that proud and ungodly title," prohibiting his archdeacon, then at Constanti-

[n] Hæret. fab. l. iv. c. 12.

[o] Pelag. Epist. viii. Conc. vol. v. col. 949.

[p] Lib. iv. Indict. 13. Epist. xxxvi. col. 549. vid. etiam Epist. xxxviii. ibid.

nople, so much as to be present at prayers with the patriarch of that place.

X. Gregory the Great succeeded Pelagius, whose *apocrisiarius*, or agent, he had been at Constantinople, when the thing was done: a man of good learning, and greater piety, and of somewhat a more meek and peaceable temper than most of those that had gone before him, which perhaps he owed, in a great measure, to those sad calamitous times, he so oft complains of, wherein he lived; and yet as tender in this point as his predecessors. John of Constantinople had lately sent him an account[q] of the proceedings in the case of John, presbyter of Chalcedon, wherein he took occasion to style himself "œcumenical patriarch" almost in every sentence. This touched pope Gregory to the quick: and, as he had an excellent talent at writing letters, he presently sends to Mauritius the emperor, to the empress Constantina, to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, to John himself, and to Sabinian, his own deacon, then residing at Constantinople.

In all which he strains all the nerves of his rhetoric to load the case with the heaviest aggravations, complaining[r] that, by the contrivance of this proud and pompous title, the peace of the church, the holy laws, and venerable synods, yea, and the commands of our Lord Jesus himself, (who by that instrument, *Tu es Petrus*, &c. had committed the care of the whole church to Peter, prince of the apostles,) were disturbed and shattered; that it better became bishops of this time rather to lie upon the ground, and to mourn in sackcloth and ashes, than to affect names of vanity, and to glory in new and profane titles; a piece of pride and blasphemy, injurious to all other bishops, yea, to the whole church, and which it became the emperor to restrain: that, by this new arrogancy and presumption,[s] he had lift up himself above all his brethren, and by his pride had shewn, that the times of Antichrist were at hand; that he wondered the emperor should write to him to be at peace with the bishop of Constantinople, chiding Sabinian,[t] his deacon, for not preventing the emperor's commands being sent to him. To Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria, and Anastasius of Antioch, (whom, elsewhere,[u] he tickles with their three sees, being the only three apostolical

[q] Lib. iv. Epist. 39. col. 555.
[r] Ibid. Epist. 32.
[s] Epist. 33.
[t] Epist. 39.
[u] Lib. vi. Ind. 15. Epist. 37.

sees founded by St. Peter, prince of the apostles, and that they mutually reflected honour upon each other,) he represents,[x] how great a diminution this was to their dignity; that they should therefore give none this title, for that so much undue honour as they gave to another, so much they took away of what was due to themselves; that this fond attempt was the invention of him who "goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," and a forerunner of him who "is king over all the children of pride." He tells John himself,[y] and that, as he pretends, with tears in his eyes, that unless he quitted this proud foolish title, he must proceed further with him; and that if his profane and ungodly humour could not be cured by gentler methods, it must be lanced by canonical severity; that by this perverse title he had imitated the devil, and had made himself like to Lucifer, son of the morning, who said, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;" telling us, that by clouds and stars we are to understand bishops, who water by their preaching, and shine by the light of their conversation, whom while he despised and trod upon, and proudly lift up himself above them, what did he but aspire above the height of the clouds, and exalt his throne above the stars of heaven? that such proud attempts had been always far from him or his predecessors, who had refused the title of universal bishop, when, for the honour of St. Peter, prince of the apostles, the venerable council of Chalcedon offered it to them.

XI. In which last passage, (inculcated by him at every turn, no less than four or five several times,[z]) I cannot but remark either his carelessness or insincerity; carelessness, in taking such an important passage upon trust; or insincerity, if knowing it to be otherwise, to lay so much stress upon so false and sandy a foundation. For the truth is, neither were his predecessors so modest, that I know of, as to refuse such a title, neither did the synod of Chalcedon ever offer it to them. There being nothing in all the acts of that council that looks this way more than this, that four persons that came from Alexandria with articles against Dioscorus, their bishop, exhibited their several libels of accusation, which they had presented to pope Leo, (who had beforehand espoused the quarrel,) with this inscription: "To Leo, the most holy and religious œcumenical archbishop and pa-

[x] Lib. iv. epist. 36. [y] Epist. 38. [z] Epist. 32. 36. 38. Lib. vii. epist. 30.

triarch of great Rome." These libels the papal legates desired might be inserted into the Acts of the council; which was done accordingly, (as is usual in all judiciary proceedings,) for no other reason (as the synod itself tells us[a]) but this, that remaining there, they might thence be again rehearsed in council, when Dioscorus himself should appear, and come to make his defence.

This is the true state of the case: and now let the reader judge, whether the council offered the pope this title, when they were so far from approving it, that they did not so much as once take notice of it. I do not deny, but that the pope's legates might have an eye that way, and design to have that title remain among the records of the council, (as they were watchful stewards to improve all advantages for their master;) and therefore we find them sometimes subscribing[b] themselves "vicegerents of Leo of Rome, bishop of the universal church;" which yet, elsewhere,[c] they thus explain: *ἀποστολικὸς καὶ πάσης ἐκκλησίας προυχὼν ἐπίσκοπος*, "the apostolical and chief bishop of the whole church." But however they intended it, certain it is, for any thing that appears to the contrary, that the fathers themselves never dreamt of any such matter, and accordingly, when they came singly to declare their judgments[d] about the epistle of pope Leo, they style him only "pope," or archbishop of Rome, nor do his legates there give him any other title. And in their synodal epistle to him,[e] they superscribe it only, "To the most holy and blessed archbishop of Rome." Binius,[f] indeed, will have the word "œcumenical" to have been in the inscription, and that it was maliciously struck out by some transcriber, because, (says he,) in the body of the epistle, the fathers own Leo to be the head of the universal church, and the father of all bishops. Whenas the letter has not one word to that purpose, more than this, that as the head presides over the members, so did Leo over the bishops in that synod; which can import no more than his presiding by his legates (*ἐν τοῖς τὴν σὴν τάξιν ἐπέχουσι, in his qui tuas vices gerebant*, as the last publishers of the Councils truly correct the translation) in that council.

But suppose the pope had had this title conferred upon him, (as Gregory untruly affirms,) it was no more than what was

[a] Conc. Chalc. Act. iii. Conc. vol. iv. col. 419.
[b] Ibid. Act. vi. col. 579.
[c] Act. xvi. col. 818.
[d] Act. iv. col. 472, etc.
[e] Ext. ibid. col. 834.
[f] Not. in loc. col. 997.

frequently given to the patriarch of Constantinople, as, to omit other instances, is evident from the council holden there anno 536, under Mennas, and another under John, eighteen years before; where John and Mennas, successively bishops of that see, have, both in the Acts of those councils, and in Libels of address from whole synods, the title of "œcumenical patriarch" near twenty times bestowed upon them. And this was several years before it was assumed by that patriarch, John, whom we mentioned before.

And it is, methinks, a sorry evasion of Baronius,[g] and his footman Binius,[h] (though it is that which they always have at hand, when an argument pinches which they know not how to decline,) that this title was foisted into the Acts of the council by some later Greeks. And yet they produce no authority, no, nor shadow of pretence from any ancient copy, that ever it was otherwise. And what if the church of Rome did receive the Acts of that council, and yet make no such clamours and loud outcry about it? Perhaps it did not entirely admit the Acts of that synod under John of Constantinople, anno 518. Binius himself says, they were but *magna ex parte recepta*, "in a great measure received by the church of Rome." And who knows whether this title might not be some part of what was rejected. But if not, perhaps the popes might slight it as a title only accidentally given, not claimed as due. Whereas Pelagius and Gregory rant so much against the other John, because he assumed it in opposition to Rome, and had it by a solemn synodical Act conferred upon him. I observe no more concerning this, than that Leo Allatius,[i] (who is not wont to neglect the least hint that may serve his cause,) speaking of this passage, barely takes notice of Baronius's inference, without the least sign of his approving it. But to return.

XII. While Gregory was venting these passionate resentments, John the patriarch dies. But the quarrel died not with him; Cyriacus, who came after him, keeping up the title. This put the pope's passion into a fresh ferment, and now all the hard things are said over again, and Cyriacus is warned to lay aside the scandal of that ungodly title,[k] that had given so much

[g] Ad Ann. 518. vol. vii. p. 5. [h] Not. in Conc. sub Menna. Conc. vol. v. col. 274.
[i] De Consens. Eccl. Or. et Occ. l. i. c. 19. n. 7.
[k] Lib. vi. Epist. 4. (vid. l. xi. Epist. 47. al. 45.)

offence; and that he would hold no communion with him until he had renounced that proud and superstitious word,[l] which was the invention of the devil, and laid a foundation for Antichrist to take possession;[m] nay, peremptorily affirms, with an *ego autem fidenter dico*,[n] that whoever either styles himself, or desires to be styled by others, "universal bishop," is by that very pride of his a forerunner of Antichrist. And when he understood that John bishop of Thessalonica, Urbicius of Dyrrachium, John of Corinth, and several others, were summoned to a synod at Constantinople, not knowing whether a snake might not lie hid in the grass, he writes to them,[o] giving them an account of the rise and progress of that proud and pestiferous title, (as he calls it,) cautioning them not only not to use it themselves, but not to consent to it in others, nor by any overt act to approve or own it; and if any thing should be craftily started in the synod in favour of it, he adjures them, by all that is sacred, that none of them would suffer themselves to be wrought upon by any arts of flattery and insinuation, of rewards or punishments, to assent to it, but stoutly oppose themselves against it, and courageously drive out the wolf that was breaking into the fold.

XIII. He that shall view these passages, and look no farther than the outside of things, will be apt to think, surely St. Gregory was the most self-denying man in the world, and that he and his successors would sooner burn at a stake than touch this title. And yet, notwithstanding all these passionate outcries, it is shrewdly suspicious, that they were levelled not so much against the title itself, as the person that bore it. We have taken notice all along what an inveterate pique the bishops of Rome had against those of Constantinople, ever since the emperors and councils had made them equal to them, and this now added to all the rest, seemed to exalt Constantinople infinitely above St. Peter's see.

Had this title been synodically conferred upon the pope, we had heard none of this noise and clamour; but for him to be passed by, and his enemy the patriarch of Constantinople to be crowned with this title of honour, it was this dropped the gall into his ink. And therefore, in the midst of all this humility, he ceased not to challenge a kind of supremacy over that bishop: Who

[l] Ibid. Epist. 24.
[m] Epist. 28.
[n] Epist. 30.
[o] Lib. vii. Epist. 70.

doubts (says he[p]) but that the church of Constantinople is subject to the apostolic see, a thing which both the emperor, and Eusebius the bishop of it, daily own? But this, it is plain, is there spoken in the case of rites and ceremonies, wherein it seems all churches must take their measures from Rome; unless, with Spalato,[q] we understand it of a subjection in point of order and dignity, that Rome was the first see, and Constantinople the second.

The truth is, to me the passage seems suspected, and that Constantinople is there thrust in for some other place; and the rather, because there was no Eusebius at that time bishop of that see, nor for a long time either before or after. However, Gregory had all his eyes about him, that no disadvantage might surprise him; and therefore, in his letter to the bishops of Greece, (mentioned before,) that were going to the synod at Constantinople, he tells them, that although nothing should be attempted for the confirmation of the universal title, yet they should be infinitely careful that nothing should be done there to the prejudice of any place or person: which though couched in general terms, yet whoever understands the state of those times, and the pope's admirable tenderness in those matters, will easily see, that he means himself. And, indeed, that the bishops of Rome looked upon the title of "œcumenical bishop" to be foul and abominable only until they could get it into their own hands, is evident, in that Gregory had scarce been twelve months cold in his grave, when pope Boniface the Third got that title taken from Constantinople, and affixed to the see of Rome; the manner whereof we shall a little more particularly relate.

XIV. Mauricius, the emperor, had in his army a centurion called Phocas, one whose deformed looks were the index of a more brutish and misshapen mind. He was angry, fierce, bloody, ill-natured, debauched, and unmeasurably given to wine and women;[r] so bad, that when a devout monk[s] of that time oft expostulated with God in prayer, why he had made him emperor, he was answered by a voice from heaven, "Because I could not find a worse." This man, taking the opportunity of the soldiers mutinying, murdered the emperor, and possessed his

[p] Lib. vii. epist. 64.

[q] De Rep. Eccl. l. iv. c. 4. n. 28.

[r] Cedren. compend. Hist. p. 404.

[s] Cedren. ib. p. 407. vid. Anastas. Sinait. quæst. xvi. p. 182.

throne, which he filled with blood, and the most savage barbarities. Ten of the imperial family he put to death;[t] and so far let loose the reins to fierceness and cruelty, that he had it in design to cut off all those whom nobility, or wisdom, or any generous or honorable actions had advanced above the common rank. And yet as bad as this lewd villain was, scarce was he warm in the throne, when he received addresses from pope Gregory, who complimented the tyrant, and that too in scripture-phrase, at such a rate, that I know not how to reconcile it with the honesty of a good man. His letter[u] begins with a "Glory be to God on high, who, according as it is written, changes times, and transfers kingdoms; who gives every one to understand so much, when he says, by his prophet, 'the most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.'"

The whole letter is much of the same strain, representing the happy advantages the world would reap under the benign influences of his government. And in another,[x] written not long after, he tells him, what infinite praise and thanks they owed to Almighty God, who had taken off the sad and heavy yoke, and had restored times of liberty under the conduct of his imperial grace and piety. He wrote,[y] likewise, to the empress Leontia, (one who is said to have been not one jot better than her husband,) with flattering caresses; and under abundance of good words, courts her kindness and patronage to the church of St. Peter, which he fails not to back with, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock," &c. "To thee I will give the keys," &c.

XV. Not long after, Gregory dies, and Sabinian, who succeeded, living not full six months, Boniface, the third of that name, takes the chair. He had very lately been *apocrisiarius*, or the pope's legate at Constantinople, where he wanted not opportunities to insinuate himself into the favour of Phocas and the courtiers. And now he thought it a fit time to put in for what the popes, notwithstanding all the pretences of self-denial, so much desired, the title of "universal bishop;" and the rather, because Cyriacus, patriarch of Constantinople, was at this time under disfavour at court. From the very first entrance upon the papacy he dealt with Phocas about this matter,[z] and at length

[t] Vid. Niceph. l. xviii. c. 41. 55.
[u] Lib. xi. Epist. xxxvi. indict. 6. col. 793.
[x] Ibid. Epist. xliii. col. 796.
[y] Ibid. Ep. xliv.
[z] Sabell. Ennead. viii. l. vi. col. 528. Plat. in vit. Bonif. III. p. 85. Naucher. vol. ii. Gener. xxi. p. 754. Adon. Martyrol. prid. Id. Novembr.

gained the point, though not without some considerable difficulty and opposition, *ægre nec sine multa contentione*, as my authors have it.

At last out comes an edict from Phocas, commanding, that the church of Rome should be styled and esteemed "the head of all churches," and the pope "universal bishop." A rare charter, sure, not founded upon the canons of the church, but upon an imperial edict; and this edict, too, granted by the vilest and the worst of men. But so they had it, no matter how they came by it. And now that title that had so lately been "new, vain, proud, foolish, profane, wicked, hypocritical, presumptuous, perverse, blasphemous, devilish, and antichristian," became, in a moment, not only warrantable, but holy and laudable, being sanctified by the apostolic see.

XVI. From henceforth the church of Rome sat as queen, and governed in a manner without control. For the empire being broken in the West, by the irruptions of the Lombards into Italy, and its power declining in the East, by the successful invasions of the Saracens, the emperors were but little at leisure to support and buoy up the honour of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate: advantages which the popes knew well enough how to improve. And, indeed, every age made new additions to the height of the papal throne, and the pride of that church increasing proportionably to its power and grandeur, hectored the world into submission to the see of Rome, which as imperiously imposed its commands and principles upon other churches, as tyrants do laws upon conquered countries. Witness (for a concluding instance) those extravagant canons,[z] or articles, ("dictates," he calls them,) which pope Gregory the Seventh published about the year 1075. I know monsieur Launoy[a] has attempted to shew, that these dictates concerning the prerogative of the see apostolic were not framed by Gregory the Seventh. Whether his reasons be conclusive, I am not now at leisure to inquire: sure I am, they are, without any scruple, owned for his by Baronius, and generally by all the writers of that church; and Launoy himself is forced to grant, that several of them are agreeable enough to the humour, pretensions, and decrees of that pope. They run thus.

[a] Ext. inter Epist. Greg. VII. ad calc. Ep. lv. Conc. vol. x. col. 110. et ap. Baron. ad Ann. 1076. p. 479.

[b] Epist. par. vi. ep. 13. (ad Ant. Faur.)

1. That the church of Rome is founded by our Lord alone.

2. That the bishop of Rome only can be truly styled "universal bishop."

3. That he alone has power to depose or reconcile bishops.

4. That his legate, though of an inferior degree, is above all bishops in council, and may pronounce sentence of deposition against them.

5. That the pope may depose absent bishops.

6. That where any are excommunicated by him, we may not, among other things, so much as abide in the same house with them.

7. That he only may, according to the necessity of times, make new laws, constitute new churches, turn a canonry into an abbey, and on the contrary divide a rich bishopric, and unite such as are poor.

8. That it is lawful only for him to use the imperial ornaments.

9. That all princes shall kiss none but the pope's feet.

10. That his name alone shall be recited in churches.

11. That there is but one only name in the world, [that is, that of "pope."]

12. That it is in his power to depose emperors.

13. That, in case of necessity, he may translate bishops from one see to another.

14. That wheresoever he please, he may ordain a clerk to any church.

15. That whoever is ordained by him, may have the government of any other church, but may not bear arms, nor may receive a superior degree from any bishop.

16. That no council ought to be called "general" without his command.

17. That no chapter nor book shall be accounted canonical without his authority.

18. That no man may reverse sentence passed by him, and he only may reverse all others.

19. That he ought not to be judged by any.

20. That none presume to condemn any person that appeals to the apostolic see.

21. That the weightier causes of every church ought to be referred to that see.

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22. That the church of Rome never erred, nor, as the scripture testifies, shall ever err.

23. That the bishop of Rome, if canonically ordained, is, by the merits of St. Peter, undoubtedly made holy, as St. Ennodius, bishop of Pavia, bears witness, favoured herein by many of the holy fathers, as is contained in the decrees of the blessed pope Symmachus.

24. That by his leave and command, subjects may accuse [their superiors.]

25. That without any synod he may depose and reconcile bishops.

26. That no man shall be accounted catholic, that agrees not with the church of Rome.

27. That it is in his power to absolve the subjects of unjust governors from their fealty and allegiance.

These were maxims with a witness, delivered like a true dictator and head of the church. And it shewed, the world was sunk into a prodigous degeneracy, when a man durst but so much as think of obtruding such principles upon the consciences of men, and imposing them upon the belief of mankind.

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